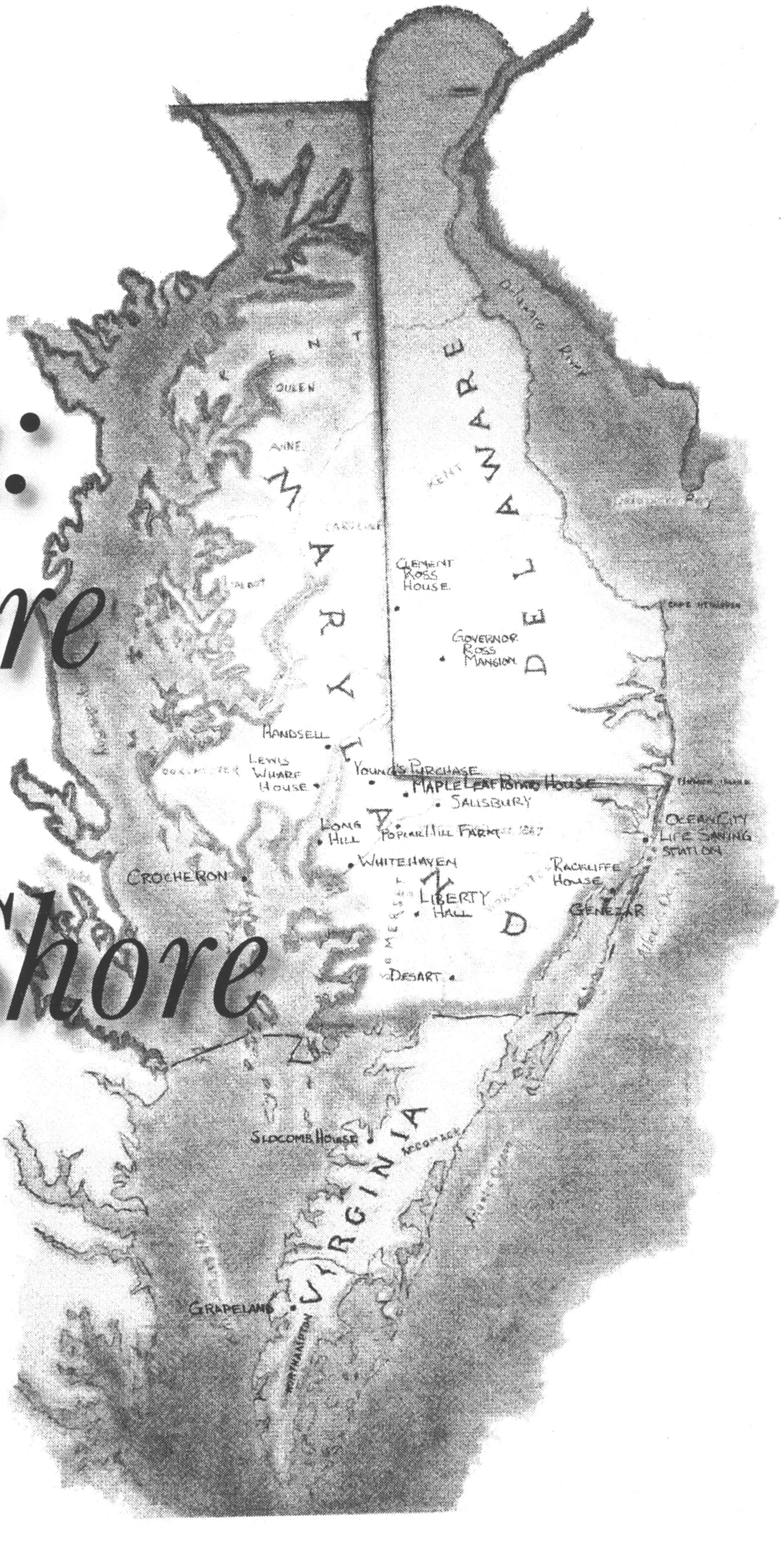
Salisbury University
Nabb Research Center
Since 1982
for Delmarva History and Culture
We're History...Without You!

Shoreline

Vol. 17, No. 1 • January 2010

For the Members of the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury University

Building Blocks of Delmarva: Architecture of the Eastern Shore


KENT
QUEEN
ANNE
CAROLINE
TALBOT
MARYLAND
KENT
DELAWARE
CLEMENT ROSS HOUSE
GOVERNOR ROSS MANSION
HANDSELL
LEWIS WHARF HOUSE
YOUNG'S PURCHASE
MAPLE LEAF POTATO HOUSE
SALISBURY
LONG HILL
POPLAR HILL FARM
WHITEHAVEN
CROCHERON
LIBERTY HALL
RACKLIFFE HOUSE
GENEZAR
OCEAN CITY LIFE SAVING STATION
DESART
SLOCOMB HOUSE
VIRGINIA
GRAPELAND

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY

EDWARD H. NABB RESEARCH CENTER FOR DELMARVA HISTORY & CULTURE
1101 Camden Ave.
Salisbury, Maryland 21801
phone: 410-543-6312
fax: 410-677-5067
e-mail: rcdhac@salisbury.edu
http://nabbhistory.salisbury.edu

The Nabb Board

Gary V. Outten, Chair
Pocomoke, MD

L. Paul Morris Jr., Vice Chair
Salisbury, MD

Michael Hitch, Secretary
Salisbury, MD

Carolyn Adkins
Mardela Springs, MD

Del. D. Page Elmore
Salisbury, MD

Charles Emery
North East, MD

Margaret Genvert
Salisbury, MD

Lenore Huffer
Berlin, MD

Eleanor Mulligan
Salisbury, MD

Kathryn Niskanen
Washington, DC

Melanie Perreault
Salisbury, MD

Sandra Quillin,
Bishopville, MD

Elizabeth Ragan
Salisbury, MD

Diane Savage
Berlin, MD

Michael Scott
Salisbury, MD

Clara Small
Salisbury, MD

Connie Strott
Salisbury, MD

Patricia Taylor
Salisbury, MD

Charles C. Thornton Sr.
Burkittsville, MD

Andrea Ullrich
Heathsville, VA

Lloyd Whitehead
Salisbury, MD

Robert Withey
Cape Coral, FL

Gordon E. Wood Sr.
Ocean View, DE

Emeritus:

E. Niel Carey
Ellicott City, MD

Thomas H. Fooks V
Wilmington, DE

John E. Jacob Jr.
Ft. Myers, FL

George W. Gering, Jr.
Salisbury, MD

Dr. G. Ray Thompson, Director
Salisbury, MD

In a Word

By Dr. G. Ray Thompson

In this issue of *Shoreline*, we are looking back at homes of our ancestors, homes that represent a variety of periods, locations and levels of preservation. Architecture, by its very nature, pulls at the heartstrings of each of us. Our writers have brought to light some familiar, and some not so familiar, examples of Delmarva architecture from the past three centuries. Both brick and wooden structures emerge through the mists of the past, we explore mainly domestic architecture, but some examples of religious and public architecture are highlighted as well. Grand mansions owned by Eastern Shore nabobs and simpler homes built by middling-planters and farmers share pages in this issue. We have conscientiously tried to stretch across county lines to include representatives from throughout Delmarva. We also have sought to show structures from various classes of Delmarva's population, recognizing that the early impermanent architecture has left few traces that would allow us to view 17th-century architecture. Finally, we have attempted to show these homes, as much as possible, as "lived in," to demonstrate that each has had a life beyond its original owner.

Some of the houses described have fascinating personal stories of occupants. Ghosts may swim eerily across the pages as you read about the homes of our ancestors. Each of these houses has "roots"—historical information and anecdotal accounts about various families or members of the families who, generation after generation, have peopled the rooms of the homes. In some cases, we'll be treated to stories of authentic restoration—how the house was saved from demolition and restored through the loving hands of recent preservationists. In other cases, we will bemoan the wanton destruction of historic structures.

By searching through the history of a house, one may find evidence of various individuals who made the home their dwelling. In all cases, research has had to be done to make these homes "come to life." Research involves looking at land and mortgage records, tax and probate records, judicial and census records with information about the generations of occupants. In some cases, current research has brought to light hither-to-unknown evidence about the history of the home and its owners. Wills, inventories and accounts help show the "personal" side of a home—what objects might have been in the homes. These records help us flesh out a view of a long-distant time and place. Complete pictures of the contents of a home may be obtained from an inventory. Maps and personal records, including letters, diaries and ledgers, may add additional information about a house and its residents.

Even looking at the architectural features of a house can bring to light additional knowledge. The age of a house might have been miscalculated. For instance, the beams and floor joists of a house can tell much about its original construction and age. Word of mouth might provide additional information. In looking at records, do not allow yourself to be thrown off by changes in spellings of personal names of owners—Rackliffe, Ratcliffe, Rakliff and Raklive are all the same name. Check out all possible variations as you comb records for clues of ownership during various periods.

Title searches themselves are complex. Each time a property is divided, each new

Continued on page 33

Submissions

The Nabb Research Center is always interested in articles on the history, culture or heritage of the Delmarva region. If you or anyone you know is interested in writing for *Shoreline*, please send material, proposals, suggestions or comments to the attention of the "Newsletter Editor" as follows:

Nabb Research Center
Salisbury University
1101 Camden Ave.
Salisbury, MD 21801

Or by e-mail to rcdhac@salisbury.edu. Please include the words "Newsletter Editor" in the subject line.

Hours & Closings

READING ROOM HOURS:
Monday: 10 a.m.-9 p.m.
Tuesday-Friday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (spring semester only)

GALLERY HOURS:
Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 1-4 p.m.
or by appointment (please call 410-543-6312)

CLOSINGS:
January 1
January 18
March 15-20
May 31

Shoreline

Contents...

4 .... *Architecture of the Ocean City Life-Saving Station*

5 .... *Annie C*

6 .... *Genezar, c. 1730*

7 .... *The Young's Purchase Farmhouse*

8 .... *Handsell*

11 ... *The Jackson House: A History*

12 ... *A Look Back at Historic Newtown*

14 ... *Lewis Wharf and the Lewis Wharf House*

16 ... *Livelihood, Hearth and Home: "Down Below" in Dorchester County*

18 ... *Liberty Hall*

19 ... *The Other Ross Mansion*

22 ... *Long Hill: A History*

24 ... *Maple Leaf Potato House*

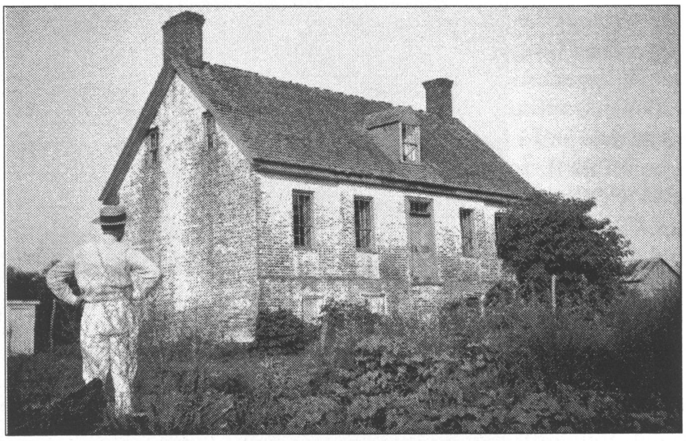
25 ... *Nabb Events*

26 ... *Poplar Hill Mansion*

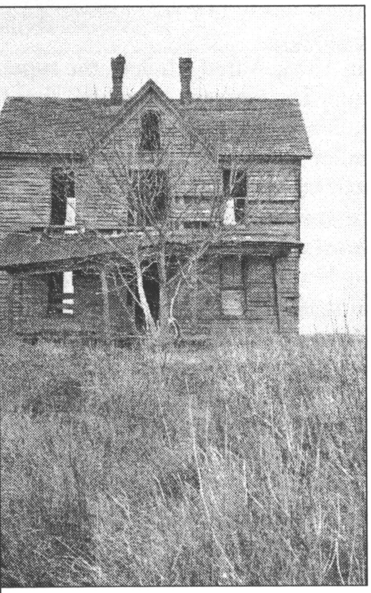
28 ... *Steve Szabo,*
The Eastern Shore Series

30 ... *Ye Bare and Ye Cubbe, 1665*

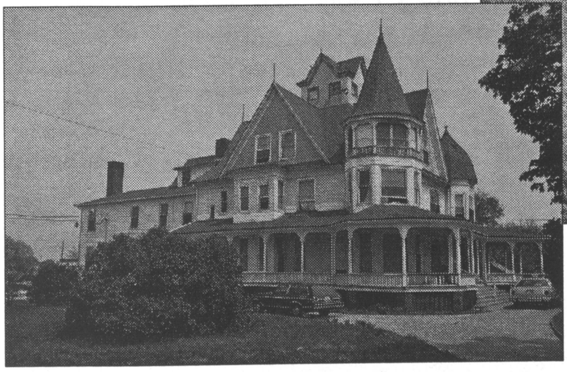
34 ... *Volunteers*



8
Handsell



28
Steve Szabo,
The Eastern Shore Series



12
A Look Back at
Historic Newtown

Volume 17 No. 1 January 2010

Director and Founder, Dr. G. Ray Thompson. *Archivist*, David Ranzan. *Research Assistant*, T. Aaron Horner. *Technical Services Librarian*, Iris Powell. *Office Manager*, Donna T. Messick. *Volunteer Coordinator*, Pat Taylor. *Receptionist*, Denise Horner. *Assistant*, Heather Burnham. *Archival Assistant*, Julie Messick. *Graduate Assistants*, Kentoya Downing-Garcia and Matthew Hollis.

This issue and back issues of *Shoreline* may be purchased for $15 each. Please contact us at 410-543-6312 or by e-mail at rcdhac@salisbury.edu for details. © 2009 Nabb Research Center at Salisbury University. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Any views or opinions presented in this newsletter are solely those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Nabb Research Center or Salisbury University. *Shoreline* is published biannually by the Nabb Research Center, 1101 Camden Ave., Salisbury, MD, 21801. Printed in the USA by the Publications Office, Salisbury University, Salisbury, MD.

About the Front Cover:
The map on the cover, illustrating some of the historic sites featured in this issue of the *Shoreline*, was taken from the mural in our Reading Room, painted by former History Department graduate student Pamela Collins.

Architecture of the Ocean City Life-Saving Station

By J.A. Hiteshew

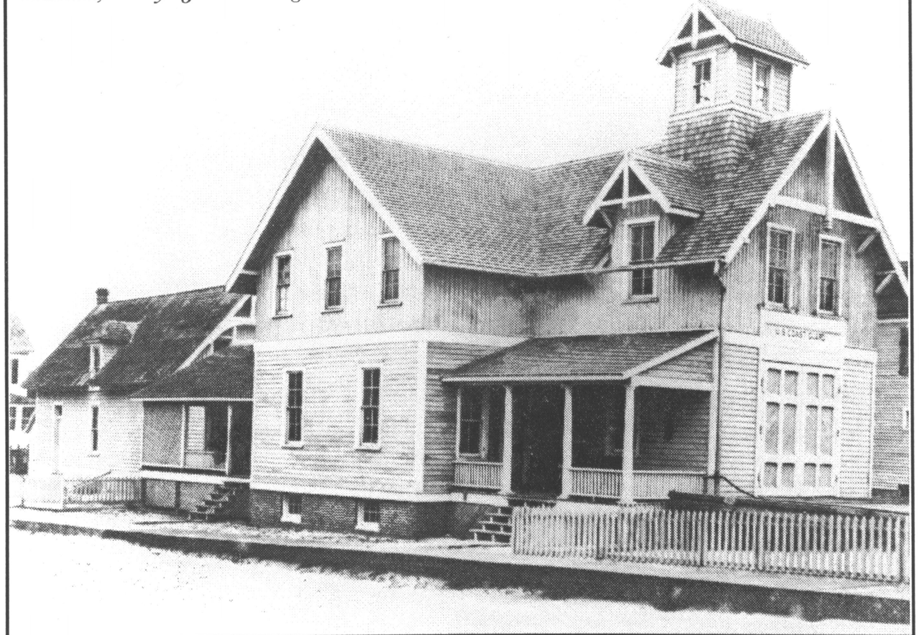
The Ocean City Life-Saving Station was officially commissioned on Christmas Day, 1878. Although from its outward appearance it looked similar to the hundreds of other stations that would come into being, there was no universal or standard design. In fact, there were so many different types of stations built that their "type," or model, was distinguished by the year in which they were designed or other one-of-a-kind examples. Ocean City would eventually host two different stations, and the second structure would be heavily modified to become the museum that the city knows to this day.

Sumner Increase Kimball headed the United States Life-Saving Service during its entire existence. He was appointed during the winter of 1870-71 after a number of serious shipwrecks resulted in a great loss of lives. Kimball instituted reforms and standards that are still adhered to by today's Coast Guard. Starting in 1872, the U.S. Life-Saving Service began building a number of unmanned "houses of refuge" in an effort to provide aid to any wrecked seamen lucky enough to make it to shore alive.

In 1874, Alfred Mullett, the supervising architect of the Treasury Department, proposed that his assistant, Frank W. Chandler, be appointed to design life-saving stations for Kimball. Chandler had studied in Paris, and through his studies was inspired by high Victorian Gothic architecture. Chandler would design several houses of refuge to be built in Florida. If there was any "standard" architecture attributed to the U.S. Life-Saving Service, Chandler can take credit. Chandler left Washington in winter 1875, returning to Boston and the academic world of architecture.

Shortly after Chandler's departure in July 1875, J. Lake Parkinson was appointed assistant superintendent for construction for life-saving stations and would also act as architect. This was a time of rapid growth for the service, as stations were being established all over the United States; the varying requirements of the locations and crews negated the idea of a universal type of station. Parkinson's designs featured sturdily built facilities that were distinctive in appearance yet allowed for the crews and their equipment to be stored at the ready, depending on the type of environment that the station oversaw.

Courtesy of the Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum, Kathryn Jones Bunting Collection.



The first life-saving station built in Ocean City, commissioned in 1878, was an 1876-type designed by Parkinson. These types of stations were built between 1875 and 1881 and may have been his first plan. They seem to have taken some of the ideas laid down by Chandler's houses of refuge and other stations. The 1878 Ocean City Station was a simple design with a boat and equipment room on the first floor and the crew's living quarters on the second. Several outbuildings housing a kitchen, coal shed, stable and a closet made up the rest of the campus. After only 12 years of service, a request was made to make major repairs to the station. Instead, an entirely new station was proposed on an expanded site.

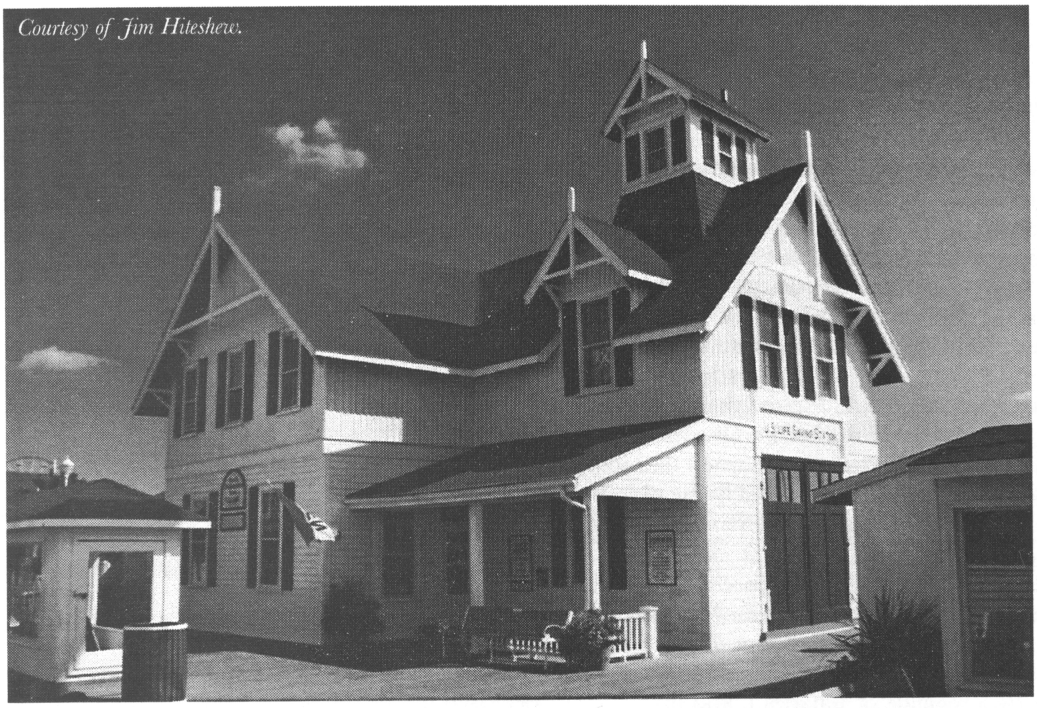
In April 1890, an adjacent lot was purchased directly west of the original site and the two plots would be combined to make up the new campus. The original station building was moved back 130 feet into the new plot and would be used for equipment storage. The outbuildings were sold off and torn down. The "new" station, completed in fall 1891, was built on original land.

The 1891 station was an 1882-type based on an unsigned drawing, which would be the plan for 23 stations built along the Atlantic coast between 1882 and 1891. It may have been designed by Parkinson as well. This also appears to be his final design before he left the U.S. Life-Saving Service.

Time and tide took their toll on the facility, and in 1911 a complete overhaul of the station was proposed. The remodel of the station began in 1912 and was completed in 1913. The new additions to the station included raising the floor two feet, as well as adding a basement, a south side two-story addition, a veranda and extensions to the kitchen and back porch. The original 1878 station building, used for repairs, was auctioned off for $20 and its fate is unknown. The new 1891 station remained unchanged with the exception of maintenance and repairs until the 1960s when the new Coast Guard Station opened in 1964 and the city abandoned the original site.

Other architects would come and go throughout the history of the U.S. Life-Saving Service and all would leave their mark on its history. Many one-of-a-kind stations would be built to meet "mission-specific" needs due to extremely hostile areas like the Great Lakes and Pacific Northwest regions. But for the most part, the more recognizable stations throughout the country can trace their roots to the designs of Chandler and Parkinson.

In 1978, after a lengthy court battle with the heirs of Ocean City's original landowner, Stephen Tabor, the town decided to move the Life-Saving Station to the south end of the boardwalk and convert it into a museum. The station stands today as the Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum and is a showcase for the history of the town, the people who built it and the lifesavers themselves who have kept watch and protected it for over 100 years.


Courtesy of Jim Hiteshew.

Jim Hiteshew, author of *The History of the Ocean City Life-Saving Station and Museum*, is a graduate of York College of Pennsylvania.

Annie C

By Melinda McPeek

The *Annie C* is a 45-foot, five-log canoe built in 1904 by Horace Bundick in Sanford, Virginia. It is one of the largest Chesapeake sailing canoes ever built and the only remaining canoe of her size. The canoe was built for Covington "Cub" Corbin and named after his mother, Annie. Cub Corbin is a descendant of Agnes D. Corbin's father, George Corbin. Agnes D. Corbin married John Ker.

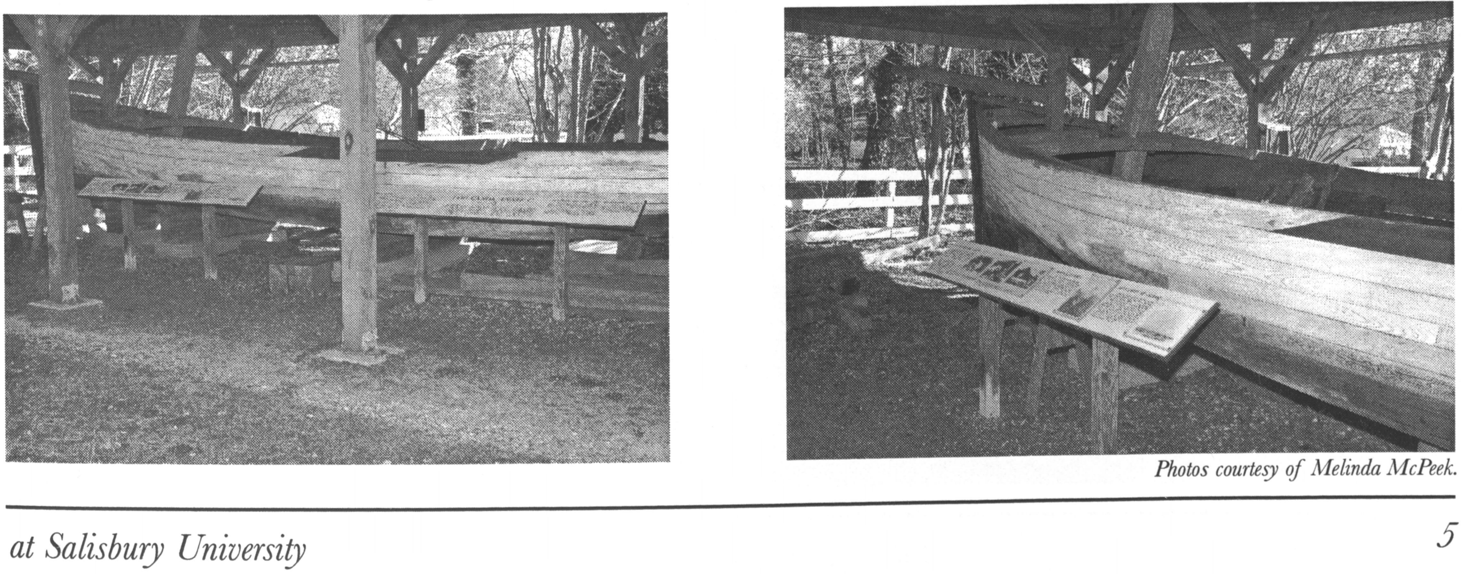
As a working vessel, she went on extended voyages around the Chesapeake Bay in search of oysters or as a freight boat. Later it became a "buy boat" used to purchase seafood from watermen and then transport it to market. The boat usually sailed with two men, though sometimes three or four lived aboard in the tiny cabin for several days.

She was in service until the 1950s when she was sunk by Hurricane Hazel in Saxis Harbor along with more than 100 other boats. She was badly damaged, but she was repaired and sailed for a few more years. She was finally abandoned in the Saxis marsh to die in the early 1960s.

The *Annie C* was acquired by the Eastern Shore of Virginia Historical Society and moved to Ker Place in 1995 thanks to the efforts of Frank Young and Dr. Harry Holcomb. Young donated the vessel and coordinated the move, and Holcomb established the Maritime Committee and served as its first chairman.

The Maritime Committee and a group of volunteers are in the process of preserving and restoring the *Annie C*. Their goal is to display this vessel to the public in a manner that shows how a log canoe was constructed and the techniques and materials used at the turn of the century.

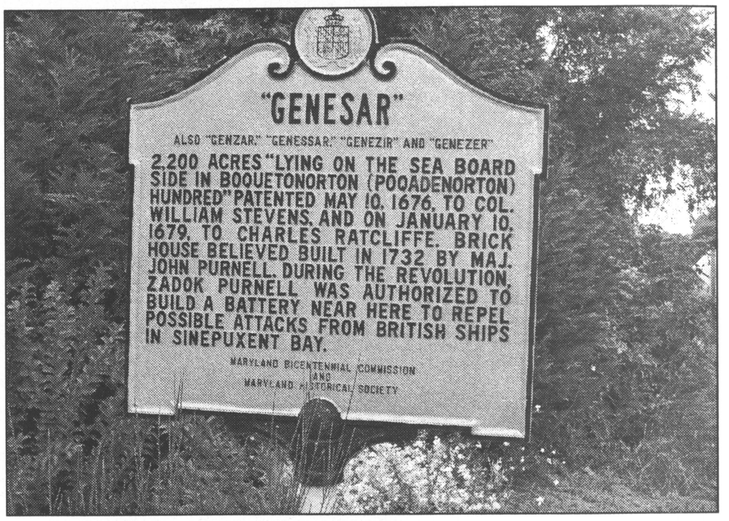
Note: Melinda McPeek is the former director of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Historical Society.


Photos courtesy of Melinda McPeek.

◆ ◆ ◆

Genezar, c. 1730

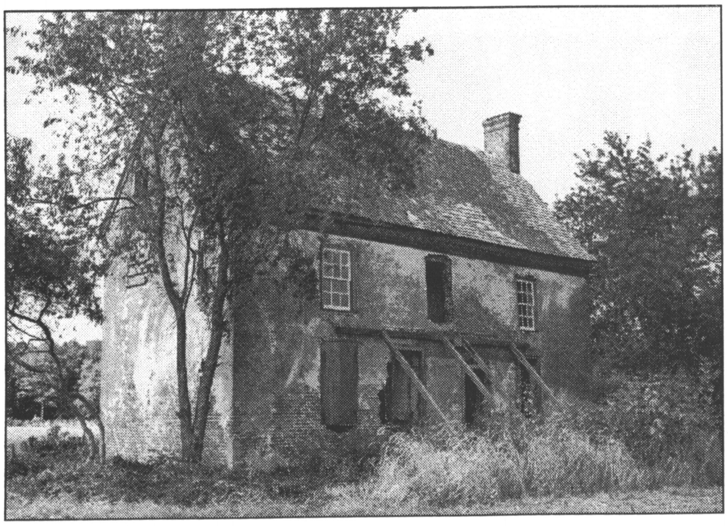
By Barry Page Neville


"GENESAR"
ALSO "GENZAR," "GENESSAR," "GENEZIR" AND "GENEZER"
2,200 ACRES "LYING ON THE SEA BOARD SIDE IN BOQUETONORTON (POQADENORTON) HUNDRED" PATENTED MAY 10, 1676, TO COL. WILLIAM STEVENS, AND ON JANUARY 10, 1679, TO CHARLES RATCLIFFE. BRICK HOUSE BELIEVED BUILT IN 1732 BY MAJ. JOHN PURNELL. DURING THE REVOLUTION, ZADOK PURNELL WAS AUTHORIZED TO BUILD A BATTERY NEAR HERE TO REPEL POSSIBLE ATTACKS FROM BRITISH SHIPS IN SINEPUXENT BAY.
MARYLAND BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION
AND
MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

When I was a little boy in the early 1960s, my family was renting an old farmhouse in Sinepuxent Neck near Assateague Island. (I later found out that the farmhouse was Ratcliffe House, which has been recently restored.) My older brother and I would ride our bicycles all over the area and we would invariably play at a spooky, abandoned brick house not far from South Point. The structure reminded me of a haunted house and, not understanding concepts such as trespassing and breaking and entering, we would explore the unsecured property, often bouncing baseballs off the brick walls while playing catch. When I was a high school student, I learned that the spooky house was in fact Genezar, which is arguably the oldest extant dwelling in Worcester County and an excellent example of 18th century plantation house architecture.

Genezar was built circa 1730 on a 2,200-acre tract of land first granted by Lord Baltimore to Col. William Stevens, one of the most prominent planters on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Stevens subsequently re-assigned the land, as was his practice, to Edward Whaley, allegedly a regicide of Charles I, and his brother-in-law, Charles Ratcliffe. Whaley was married to Charles Ratcliffe's sister Elizabeth and at his death would leave a portion of his estate to his heir Edward Whaley II. Other parcels were left in the possession of Charles and Elian Ratcliffe as well as an Accomack, Virginia, planter, Nathaniel Ratcliffe. When Charles Ratcliffe died, he willed 200 acres of the Genezar plantation to his daughter Eliza.

The extant plantation house was built between 1730-32 by Major John Purnell and his wife Elizabeth Ratcliffe Purnell. Their son, Thomas, seemed to be the first permanent resident of Genezar, and he was residing on the estate at the time of his death in 1755. The Purnell family was one of the most prominent planter families in Somerset County (Worcester County after 1742) during the Colonial period. Thomas Purnell's estate inventory, found at the Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture, gives the reader a clear glimpse into the wealth of an 18th century Eastern Shore Planter. Purnell's estate was valued at £2425.7.6, a fortune at a time when the average workingman in the Maryland Colony often made less than £12 per year. According to the inventory, the deceased owned 37 slaves, large quantities of tobacco, 1,550 bushels of Indian corn, 110 bushels of salt, many sundry farm animals, beehives and over 1,600 planks of oak and cypress. Purnell was one of the wealthiest planters on the Shore, indicating the importance of Genezar's location on a navigable body of water with access to the Atlantic Ocean and the agricultural value of the land.



During the American Revolution, Zadok Purnell, Thomas' son, occupied the house. Local legend reports that Zadok was involved in a bizarre episode when a British warship sailed through the North Inlet (which no longer exists) into Sinepuxent Bay. Fearing that a British or Tory landing party might plunder Genezar, Purnell armed his slaves with corn stalks and repeatedly marched them up and down the fields in front of the plantation. When the slaves reached a spot where they were out of sight of the ship, they would crawl on their hands and knees through the snow and march forward again, giving the appearance of being a large military force. This ruse de guerre scared the British off, possibly saving the house from destruction.

Local lore also indicates that during the War of 1812, a British man-of-war again threatened Genezar, reportedly firing a cannonball at the plantation house. Luckily, the British seamen involved in the attack were uncharacteristically bad shots, missing the house. The author wonders, however, if this incident may have been confused with a British cannon attack on Henry's Grove, a nearby plantation that was fired on by a British raider during the war. It is possible that the same ship also unsuccessfully attacked Genezar, but this cannot be proven.

In the early 1800s, United States Senator Dr. John Selby Spence took ownership of the plantation, which was part of the inheritance of his wife Maria. In 1867, Zadok Purnell Henry purchased the property for $15,000 and it remained in the Henry family until it was sold to outside owners in 1939. One of the last members of the Henry family to live on site was Addie Henry Carey and her husband. Miss Addie was my first Sunday school teacher and my brother's godmother. The subsequent owners were unable to maintain the property, and despite the attempts of the current owners, the Humphreys family, to restore the home, Genezar is in a deplorable state of ruin.

As built, Genezar was a splendid, impressive structure. Architectural historians Henry Chandlee Forman and Paul Baker Touart both consider Genezar to be the finest example of the transitional style Georgian mansion on the Lower Eastern Shore. Perhaps the most impressive feature of Genezar is the exquisite Flemish bond brickwork, featuring diamond pattern lozenges and inverted chevron designs on the gable ends near the fascias. Even in the current state of ruin, one can see the craftsmanship evident in the brickwork. The original building was approximately 45' long, 19' wide and two and one-half stories high featuring a tall roofline. When first built, Genezar had two doors in the front and the back and, keeping with traditional Georgian symmetry, an equal number of windows adorned both sides of the structure. Nineteenth-century owners unfortunately covered much of the facade with stucco and built over two of the doors. Massive brick chimneys on each side of the edifice provide both architectural balance and functional heat.

The interior of the house was equally impressive, featuring expensive ornate wood paneling and other design features included to show the wealth and social position of the owners. Both the great room and great hall of the house included large, exposed decorative beams that were later covered over with wood panels. Traditional chair rails were evident in each room, and the fireplaces featured expensive carved mantels. Reportedly, Genezar also had a magnificent staircase, but nothing of this feature remains. Few houses on the Eastern Shore were as elaborately built and well-appointed as Genezar, but little of the magnificence of the interior of the house is still extant. In 1941, a group of vandals illegally removed most of the paneling and elaborate woodwork from the house, possibly selling the architectural features to high-end home restorers. Only a shell of the once opulent home survived, and subsequent neglect as well as the ravages of time have contributed to the decline of the structure. Despite the poor condition of the plantation house, even the most casual observer can still see the craftsmanship and beauty of Genezar. One hopes that funding will be available someday to restore the house in much the same way as Ratcliffe House has been rebuilt.

Barry Page Neville, M.A., is a history instructor at Salisbury University and at the Eastern Shore Community College in Melfa, Virginia, and is a native of Worcester County, Maryland.

The Young's Purchase Farmhouse

By Paul J. Marshner

The Young's Purchase farmhouse (photo on page 21), located on Railroad Avenue on the northern edge of Mardela Springs, Wicomico County, Maryland, is a restored Colonial house known as a "stack" house. Moved from its earlier location across from U.S. Route 50 in the 1980s by the Adkins family and restored to its original 18th century condition, the Colonial-era home sits on 150 acres of land known as "Young's Purchase." Before moving to its present location, the house saw continuous occupancy until around 1960, when it sat vacant and neglected for decades. Final restoration of Young's Purchase was completed in 1984.

J. Howard Adkins and his wife Louise, along with Howard's cousin Dale, shared a special passion for the abundant history of the Eastern Shore, the Mardela Springs and Barren Creek area in particular. They had a tremendous influence in keeping alive for future generations the history of Young's Purchase and the rich history of the Barren Creek-Mardela Springs area and of Wicomico County. Not only history buffs, but also amateur historians, curators, restorers and archaeologists, they showed their dedication to preserving the history of the Eastern Shore by moving and restoring the Young's Purchase house at their own expense, buying a lot, clearing it and then moving the house to that location. Today, the house is part of the Adkins Historical Museum Complex, Inc., in Mardela Springs.

Constructed between 1720 and 1728, the house became the home of William and Rachel Young, who moved from Chestertown, Maryland, to the area known as Barren Creek. The Youngs applied for a survey in 1717 and received a land patent in 1720. Records show construction of the house was completed in 1724. The couple resided in the house until 1728, after which the Huffington family purchased the home and land. Other owners have included the Bratton, Cooper, English, Watson and Bennett families.

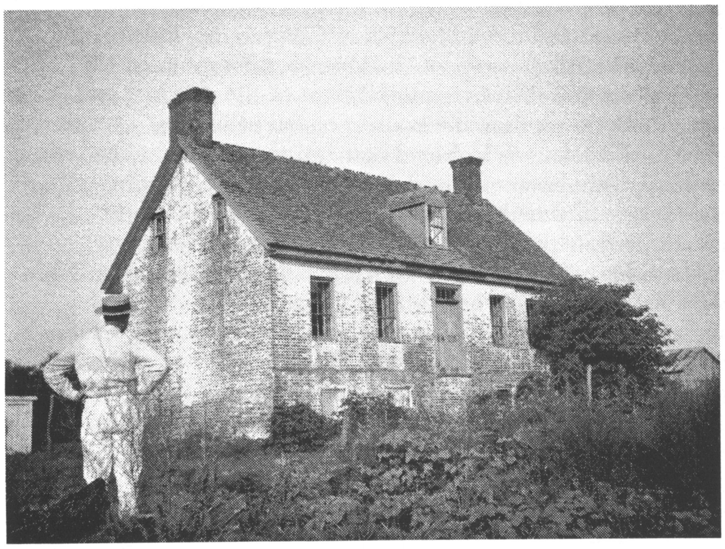
Likewise interested in preserving the past, Kenneth and Rebecca Bennett had already finished restoration work on the former Bratton-Taylor store on Main Street. The Bennetts donated Young's Purchase to the Adkins family, whom they knew, sometime in the 1960s along with a one-room schoolhouse. The home was by then so ramshackle after years of abandonment and neglect that it seemed to be in no condition for restoration. It was leaning and in danger of falling down.

The house is a two-story, one-room plan house. A shed-roofed kitchen and a single-flue chimney, both completed around 1900, changed the appearance of the house from its original 18th century construction. A single brick flue built in 1900 serves as a stove chimney. A narrow, steep staircase to the second floor and fitted around the brick flue finished the 1900 additions to the house. The interior, sheathed with 10" by 12" yellow pine boards and fastened horizontally with cut nails, complete the interior walls. Sheaths on the east wall show the original location of a fireplace chimney. The exposed beams on the second floor show early construction techniques; floor joists are hardwood logs, squared off at either end. The house is gabled at each end. The east gable end has a sash window located on the southeast corner wall. The rear of the house has sash windows too, which allow natural light into the first and second floors. The exterior of the house is clad with a combination of plain and beaded weatherboards. The original surviving weatherboard is limited to a few boards at the boxed cornice, and a few survive above the windows. A beaded board entrance door serves the kitchen and another beaded board entrance door serves the main living area. Black asphalt covers a steeply pitched roof.

Note: Paul J. Marshner is a local historian and member of the Adkins Historical and Museum Complex, Inc. He lives in Sharptown, Maryland.

Handsell

By Midge Ingersoll



Brief Handsell History

Handsell is a small but significant historic building located just north of Vienna in Dorchester County just above the Chicone Creek on Indiantown Road. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in March 2008 and is now owned by the Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance, Inc. with a Preservation Easement held by the Maryland Trust. The house sits on land once part of the Chicacoan Nanticoke's (also called Chicacone or Chicone) permanent native settlement.

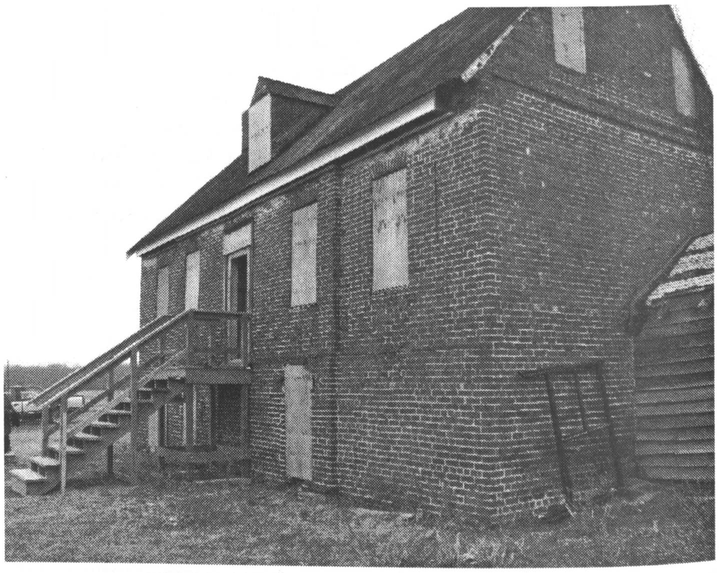
In 1668, the Lord Proprietor of Maryland formally acknowledged the existence of the Eastern Shore Indian towns and designated several areas as Indian reservations, including Chicacoan (Chicone) on the Nanticoke River. Chicone was one of the largest Indian villages on the Eastern Shore. At Chicone, a patent of 700 acres was held by Thomas Taylor, a high ranking military officer, licensed Indian trader and interpreter who was usually the person sent by the proprietor to deal with the Nanticoke "emperor" during this time. As a trader with the natives, Taylor named this property Handsell, which is a Middle English word for a gift given on any special occasion, such as taking on a new job or beginning some enterprise, or for earnest money—a down payment or a first installment. It could also be the first money taken by a trader on any given day, which explains why Taylor, who apparently made Handsell his "trading post," would have selected the name. It is interesting that both the names Handsell and Indiantown Road have survived until today.

By 1720, Handsell was owned by John Ryder/Rider. (Rider considered himself "owner" even though the land was officially reserved for the Indians.) He also owned most of the land south of Vienna, which included the plantation called Weston. After the Indian reservation was dissolved in 1768, the land was returned to the heirs of Rider, his daughters Ann (Mrs. James Billings), Sarah (Mrs. Thomas Nevett) and Dorothy (Mrs. John Henry). Ann Billings was deceased by then, so the rights went to her only living child, Ann Billings Steele.

It is believed that a large brick plantation house was built by Henry Steele when his wife Ann inherited a 450-acre portion of Handsell in the 1768 settlement. Steele was an English gentleman and merchant from Oxford, Maryland, who was also a business partner of Col. John Henry, father of Gov. John Henry. Steel moved to Dorchester County near Vienna when he married Ann Billings, who not only was a granddaughter of John Rider, but also first cousin of Gov. Henry. In the years 1763, 1769 and 1770, Henry Steele was a delegate from Dorchester County in the Maryland Assembly and House of Burgesses. The Steele family is also connected to the Henry family through several later marriages. At the time of Henry Steele's death in 1782, he owned over 8,000 acres in Dorchester County and more than 90 slaves.

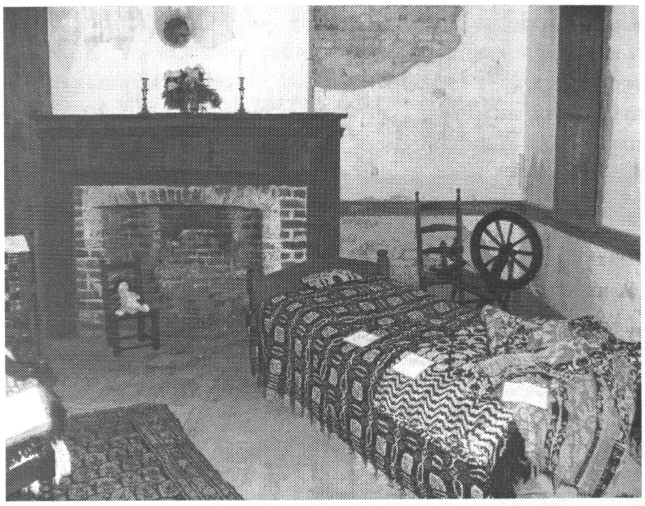
It is believed that when the original house suffered a fire that caused a major collapse of the roof, second story and entire rear façade, the walls left standing were used to build the present structure. The current brick house incorporates parts of Steele's larger, 18th century brick plantation house in its front and side facades. While research has not confirmed the exact date of the building of the original house nor the collapse, or the date for the rebuilding to its present form, it is hoped that more research and possibly some archaeology may reveal clues to the timeline of the house.

Handsell as it stands today is a well-preserved example of a regional vernacular interior with a high degree of integrity to an early 19th-century period with a simple one-and-a-half-story hall, central passage and parlor plan. It contains a raised cellar with a deteriorated interior cook fireplace and oven, which was obviously part of the original house. The structure remains distinct in the way an 18th century brick house was creatively rebuilt after a collapse, using a floor plan typical of many local houses of the period, while still incorporating the standing walls of the earlier structure. This successful and graceful combination of part of a Georgian brick façade, but with more modest proportions and interiors, makes Handsell unlike any other home known on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.



Photos Courtesy of the Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance.

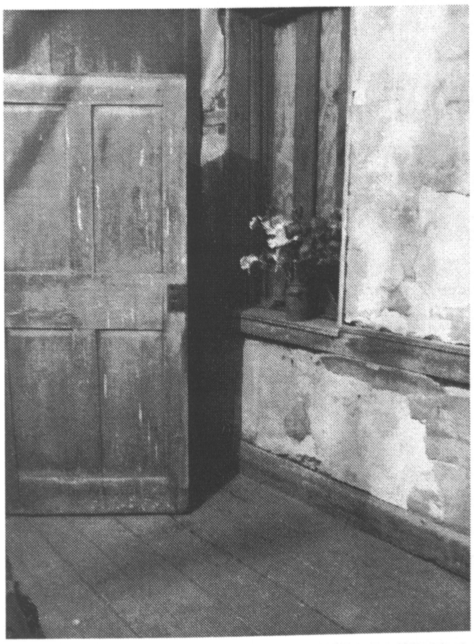
The house appears to have been the Steele homestead until about 1806 when it ceased to be a primary residence. But it remained a place where family members stayed while overseeing the farm, which they owned until 1837. For this and other reasons, it is believed the original brick house had been destroyed by the first decade of the 19th century, if not before.



Archaeology at the Site

Because it is the location of a long-time native village and has been occupied since the natives' contact period with the first European settlers, unknown archaeological resources might exist on the property. Most likely a plantation house of the size of the original Handsell would have had support outbuildings adjoining or near the house. In a recent archaeological excavation, evidence for the re-building of Handsell House was found behind the existing structure. It is clear that there are important archaeological remains around the house and on the larger property.

The Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance (NHPA) understands the potential for these archaeological deposits to inform about the history of the building as well as the prehistoric past and the historic period occupants of the property. As efforts move forward to restore the building and develop interpretive materials, archaeological work is considered necessary to gain some understanding of what resources exist and where they are on the property. This summer, the NHPA was given a grant by the Bartus Trew Foundation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation to undertake an archaeological survey through test holes and two larger open pits in order to achieve two goals that Ed Otter, local archaeologist, helped define in a preliminary archaeological plan for Handsell. He wrote: "The first goal is to gain a basic understanding of the resources on the property. There are undoubtedly building foundations and cultural features on the property that are currently unidentified. The second goal is to mitigate ground disturbance prior to restoration activity. Archaeology in those areas should precede ground disturbance in order to collect available archaeological information that would otherwise be lost."



According to Otter: "While the immediate goal at Handsell is to restore the house, it is also planned that this will become a public-accessible historic site. As a nationally recognized historic site, it will be important that additional archaeological work be performed on the property. This work will further define outbuildings and activity areas, establish chronological sequences for building episodes, assist in restoration by providing architectural details, and produce material culture that will assist with the interpretation of life at Handsell."

The NHPA is aware of and shares sensitivity for the fear of inappropriate disturbance of Native American sites and supports all efforts to protect the larger site in the Indiantown area. But since the two acres around the house have been disturbed for more than two centuries by continued residential occupation, gardening and farming, the NHPA feels the over-riding possibilities of what the archaeology may reveal about the brick house justify some investigation on this small parcel.

Future Plans for Handsell and the Organization

The Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance was originally founded in 2005 to purchase and restore the house. The first objectives were to raise the necessary funds to make the purchase, the second to nominate the house for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, which as mentioned earlier, was accomplished within two years. Since Handsell was still in such a rare, unaltered state, the organization then decided to apply for funding to have a complete Historic American Buildings survey done of the property before any restoration was begun. MHT and Preservation Maryland agreed and provided matching grants for the work intended to be completed this fall. The study includes measured drawings, photography and a historic report that will be filed at the HABS office in Washington and eventually be in the National Archives. This will make these records accessible on the Internet for study world-wide.

In the 1783 tax assessment records, Handsell is shown to have had five "logged houses," a description of slave cabins. This combined with inventories of slaves and other documents has shown that there were many dozen slaves who once lived and worked the land around Handsell, lending great potential for African-American study of the property. The NHPA, Inc. has already begun researching the African-American history of the property and hopes to form alliances with other groups to continue this study, including continuing the work already begun on helping local African Americans and people with Native American heritage to tie their ancestry to the Indiantown area.

In the same vein, the group has been attempting to locate descendants of the previous owners of Handsell to coordinate genealogy and locate historical facts of the property which may have been previously lost. Eventually the hope is to reunite descendants of the Native, African American and Europeans who once lived in Indiantown.

Annually, the NHPA holds fundraising

◆ ◆ ◆

"soirees," gala parties always held at a historic property. Every October they have their annual meeting featuring a special guest speaker. The 2009 annual meeting featured key speaker Donald Shomette, author of 17 books on maritime history, including Pirates of the Chesapeake, and also an underwater archaeologist. Until the house is safely restored for public traffic, the organization opens Handsell for tours and a special exhibit for one weekend during the month of May. Last year the display featured American coverlets.

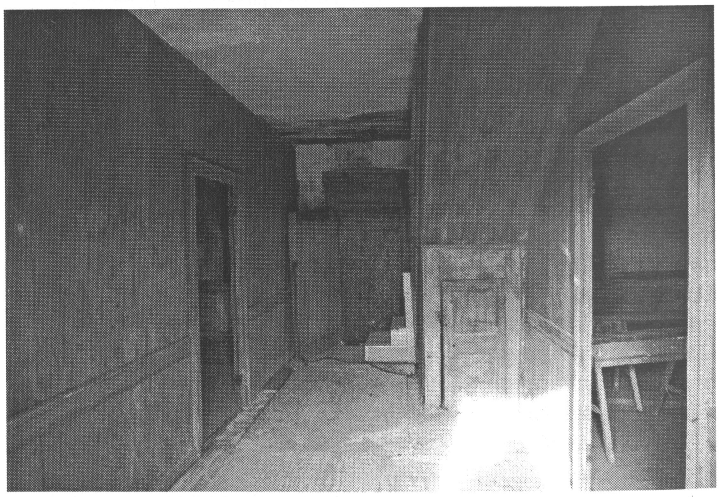
In May 2009, the Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance received Dorchester County's Heritage Area Award for "Organizational Excellence," along with citations from the County Commissioners and the Maryland State Senate. Also in May 2009, Handsell was listed by Preservation Maryland, Inc. and Maryland Life Magazine as one of Maryland's Most Endangered Places.

Handsell is unique in many ways, but the pure state of its interior is nearly a miracle. The house was never electrified or plumbed. There are no layers of linoleum or modern drywall to break through. The house today looks just as it did when the last residents lived there. Because of this, the NHPA's goal is less of restoration and more of preservation. The house will be repaired where necessary to make it safe for visitors, but left in as much a state as it was found as practical. The interpretation of the house will be that of an overseer's or a 19th century farmer's residence, not the grand Georgian plantation house that it once was. Eventually it is hoped that a barn-looking structure can be built to house collections and displays and act as a place for social gatherings and meetings, not just for the NHPA, but for all organizations with similar missions.

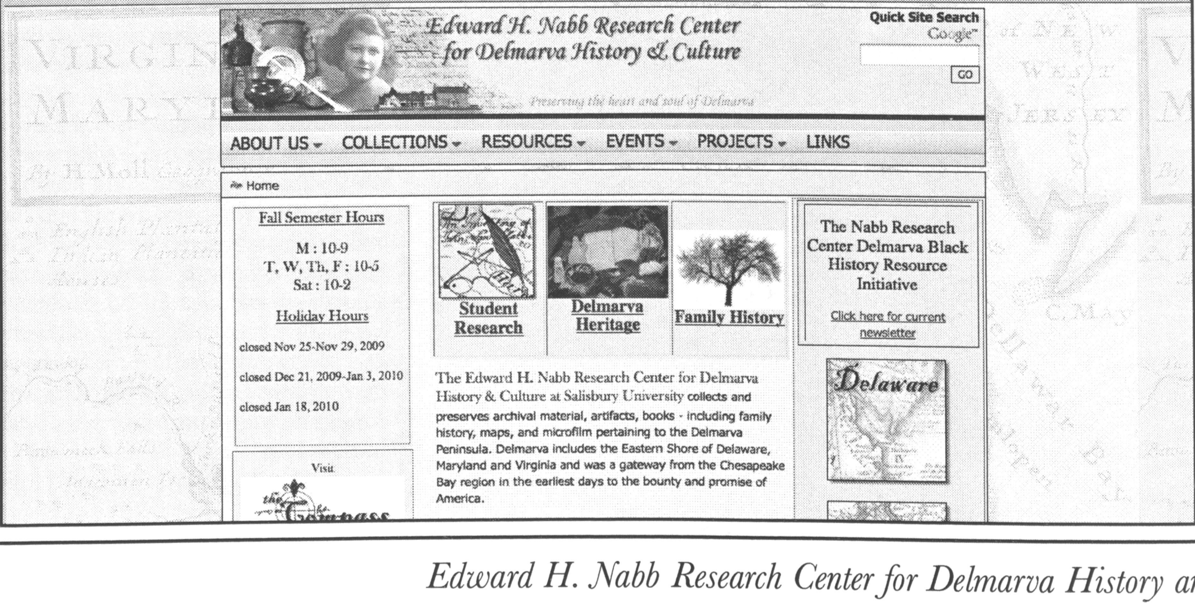
In 2007, the organization was fortunate to be able to purchase 110 original letters of Catherine Steele Ray, granddaughter of Henry and Ann Steele. Written primarily between 1786 and 1863, many of the letters come from Hambrooks, home of Catherine's sister Mary Steele Henry (Mrs. John C.) and some from Eldon, home of Catherine's brother James B. Steele. But the most interesting for the NHPA are the lovely letters written by Ann Ogle Buchanan Steele and her husband John Nevett Steele, who postmarked their news from "the Indiantown," near Vienna. They lived in a home just up the road and in view of Handsell. Through their eyes, we are able to see the life that was led in Indiantown—its weather conditions, farming issues, family illnesses, and travel to and from Cambridge by relatives.

On July 23, 1823, as she missed the rest of the family who no longer lived nearby, Ann O.B. Steele wrote, "If you were all only at Handsell, all would be right." Perhaps Ann would think that all will be right once again when Handsell is restored.

Midge Ingersoll is the secretary of the Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance, Handsell House. News and events associated with Handsell can be found on the Web site of the Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance at www.restorehandsell.org.



Find information and listings of upcoming events by visiting our Web site at **http://nabbhistory.salisbury.edu**



Fall Semester Hours

M : 10-9
T, W, Th, F : 10-5
Sat : 10-2

Holiday Hours

closed Nov 25-Nov 29, 2009

closed Dec 21, 2009-Jan 3, 2010

closed Jan 18, 2010

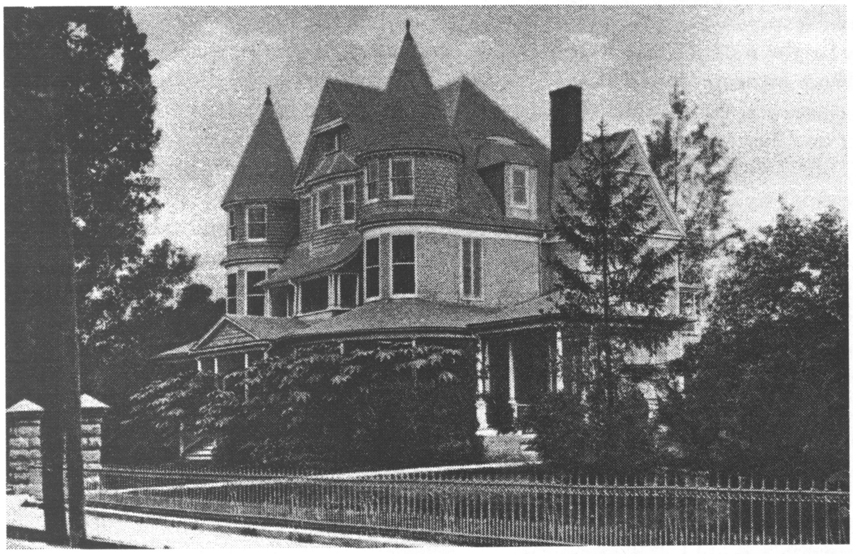
The Nabb Research Center Delmarva Black History Resource Initiative

Click here for current newsletter

The Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History & Culture at Salisbury University collects and preserves archival material, artifacts, books - including family history, maps, and microfilm pertaining to the Delmarva Peninsula. Delmarva includes the Eastern Shore of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia and was a gateway from the Chesapeake Bay region in the earliest days to the bounty and promise of America.

The Jackson House: A History

By Anne Kennerly Morris Clay 1974
Reprinted from the *Collection of Wicomico County Histories*



On the corner of Wicomico Street and Camden Avenue in Salisbury, Maryland, stands an imposing, Queen Anne-style building, popularly called "The Towers" years ago, when it was owned by a prominent local family, the Jacksons. Today, the home is owned by St. Francis de Sales Roman Catholic Church and is used as the rectory.

U.S. Senator William P. Jackson built the house circa 1893 and during his term in office often entertained during his term in office such distinguished guests as Gov. Goldsborough and Vice President Marshall, as well as many bishops of the Methodist Church. In fact, Senator Jackson was an active member of Asbury Methodist Church in Salisbury and was instrumental in building the church sanctuary on North Division Street.

Although the house itself is fewer than 100 years old, nonetheless, the history of the property is rather old and varied and may be of some interest. Previous to the Jacksons, such families as Disharoon, Parsons and Winder had owned the tract of land, which was known as "Sand Plain" or "Sandy Plains." At one time, there was a sand hill bank more or less at the point where Wicomico Street ends today at the Wicomico River.

From a study of the land records, it seems that the Winder family had possession of the property from 1771 until circa 1800, when Thomas Jones Winder, a doctor, sold off his interest, which he had purchased from John Winder of Northampton County, Virginia. As was recited in the last-mentioned deed, John Winder had inherited the property though the last will and testament of one William Winder and had also purchased parts of the property from William's other heirs.

William Winder owned the tract Sandy Plains before the Revolution, having bought it from Lord Baltimore's Commissioners in 1771, out of a resurvey of "his Lordship's Manner of Wecomoco," but the property, along with the rest of the ungranted lands of the "Manner" aforesaid, was by act of the General Assembly held in Annapolis October 7, 1778, confiscated as British property; whereby, the fee simple interest vested in the state. In 1783, Nathaniel Ramsey, one of the commissioners for preservation and sale of confiscated British property, conveyed the land back to William Winder and confirmed the title he had acquired before the Revolution. Thus it would appear that said William was either a British subject or sympathizer and that the tract of land was not privately owned before his possession, as Lord Baltimore had controlled it. There is a possibility that Sandy Plains was at one time part of the larger tract, "Pemberton's Good Will," owned by Winders since 1680 and acquired by a certain William Winder in 1762. This assumption can be made because the oldest part of Pemberton's Good Will at the head of the Wicomico River, previously called the Rokiawakin, where it divides itself and makes a fork, and the lot and house today stand very near this location. William Winder must have been a relatively prosperous individual as he owned some 23 slaves, 18 black cattle, five horses and 12 ounces of plate, which were kept on 686 acres of Sandy Plains.

Architecturally, there are a number of distinct features on the building, primarily on the first floor, which clearly attest to an elegance and elaborate way of living in days gone by. There are four floors on the ground floor, superimposed upon one another. When the house was built, a subfloor was laid, followed by a flatboard, number-one pine floor. Upon these was laid a finished floor of number-one, heart-rift pine which would wear better as the grain and rings were vertical or turned on edge. It is almost impossible to have lumber cut this way today. Circa 1930, a 1/2- to 3/4-inch quarter-oak floor was added, as highly waxed oak floors had become very popular by the early 1930s.

Other highlights include the 2-inch by 12-inch on 24-inch center joists that make the structure especially sturdy. The beveled siding is 5/8-inch, number-one white pine and the roof is constructed of slate brought in from Port Deposit, Maryland. The silver-plated hardware and tiled fireplaces are evidence of the wealth and craftsmen available so many decades ago. To the rear of the house stand the picturesque stables. After the original stables burned circa 1915, they were rebuilt using the same pattern as the original. Their present use is as apartments.

It is hoped that a suitable buyer for the Jackson house will soon be found, one who will be able to care for the building, restore it well and keep it up in a style reminiscent of its rich past. To completely recreate such a structure today would well nigh be impossible, not only for the expense involved but also for the lack of experienced artisans. The mansion is truly one of a kind, not only in the Salisbury area, but also in the State of Maryland.

Note: The house was destroyed by the wrecker's ball in the fall of 1975 [Ed.]. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

Anne Kennerly Morris Clay is a noted preservationist and local historian in Wicomico County.

A Look Back at Historic Newtown

By Jessica Glazer

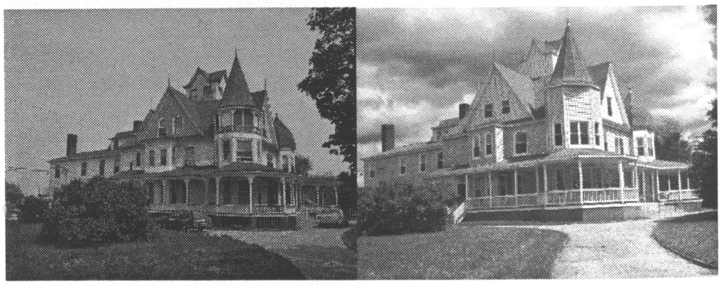
Near Route 13 rests one of Salisbury's hidden treasures. The Historic District of Newtown was Salisbury's first residential area and by far the most architecturally exquisite neighborhood in the city. From intricate window installations to porch rails that could pass as artwork, Newtown is still as visually appealing as it was when it was first constructed. Most of the Queen Anne-inspired houses, built during the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, are "Victorian"-style dwellings complimented by romantic exterior designs.

The genesis of the area now known as "Newtown" was a disastrous fire. In October 1886, a small stable fire turned into one of the most devastating fires in the history of Salisbury. It spread through Main Street and destroyed everything in its path. Most of the residential dwellings in the city were burned, along with every possession inside of them. Local churches, businesses and the town hall were burned to the ground, leaving a 22-acre area completely desolate. Through the devastation, the citizens of Salisbury and neighboring areas came together and turned the wreckage left by the fire into what is now referred to as Newtown. A tragedy like the 1886 fire could have ruined the lives of those affected forever, but instead, the citizens of Salisbury rallied together to overcome their misfortune. They took their losses and turned them into a vital neighborhood which has lasted well over 100 years and is still functioning. Newtown is the oldest residential area in Salisbury and it remains the most beautiful.

Prior to the 1886 fire and the reconstruction of the city, the residential area was noted for its fine architecture in the Federal style. Characteristics of this style consist of low-pitched roofs, large-scale windows and siding, and geometric elements that enhance the distinction of Federal homes. The windows in a Federal style house are a major clue to its layout inside. The placement of the windows shows where rooms begin and how many stories there are. Federal style homes utilize natural light and tend to place windows in peculiar places with potential for sunlight to shine through. Multi-pane sash windows, tri-part windows, elliptical fan lights, and bay windows exemplify the ways in which Federal-style homes use window installations as key features. The Poplar Hill Mansion, located in the Historic District of Newtown, survived the Great Fire of 1886 and embodies the appearance of a Federal-style house. With its grand size and symmetrical window placement, The Poplar Hill Mansion stands out in a sea of Victorians.

After the fire, however, Federal-style architecture took a back seat to the Victorian- and Queen Anne-styled homes that were constructed in Newtown. Victorian architecture is very distinct. Between the roofs, porches, windows, detail and color, the houses designed in the Victorian style tend to be the most unique constructions of all. Each architectural feature comes together like a puzzle to make a richly-styled structure. With all of these features being so intricate, the upkeep on a Victorian house is not only time-consuming, but also expensive. Additions and renovations may have been made to the houses, but today, they still show their original exterior character.

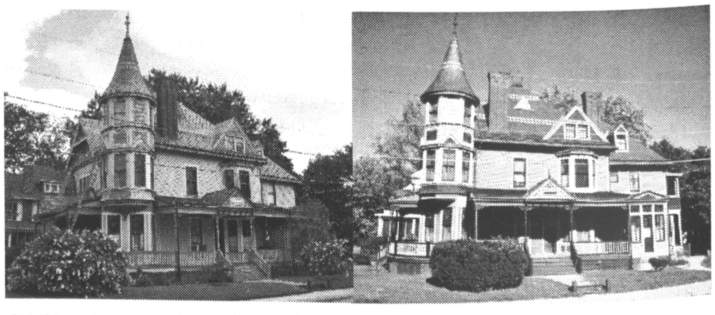
Of the many remaining examples of the city's triumph through tragedy in Newtown, The Dr. Robert Naylor, Gillis-Grier, Perry-Cooper and B. Frank Kennerly houses depict features that characterize the exuberance of the Queen Anne and Victorian styles of the time.



Hotel Esther: Dr. Robert Naylor House

The Dr. Robert Naylor House, more recently known as Hotel Esther, shows typical features of a Victorian house. The roofing pattern is one major factor. There is no symmetry in the way the different types of roofs are set to make one covering. There are simple tent roofs, towers which end in conical roofs, along with circular bay windows topped with dome-shaped roofs. One classic detail of a Victorian house is represented by the roof cresting. Finials top every peak of every rooftop.

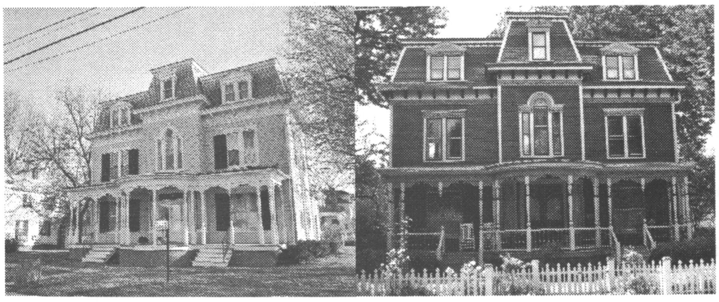
The Hotel Ester has changed the color and quality of the materials over the years, but kept the key features that make it an original piece of architecture. Woodwork that had once decorated the towers and windows of the Dr. Robert Naylor House, have been removed and replaced with simpler, weatherproof materials. Additions have been made to the side and back of the house as well. The structural lines follow the same direction as they have since the beginning of construction.



Gillis-Grier House

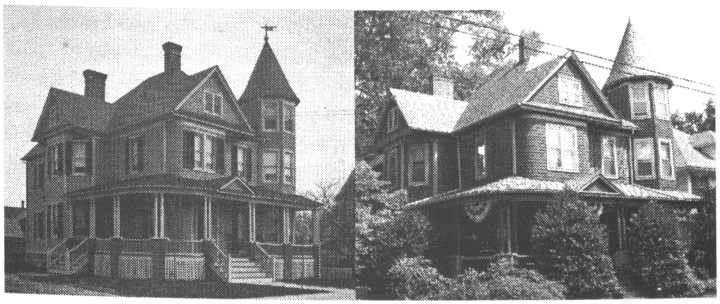
The Gillis-Grier House may be one of the most eye-catching houses in all of Newtown. It is a three-story house with towers and conical roofs that dominate the house from whichever angle one views it. The detail on this house is intricate and rich, from the colors which exemplify the Victorian style to the porches and woodwork along the railing. Roofs with patterns of slate pieces, brick chimneys, terracotta paneling, horizontal siding, bay windows, a wrap-around porch and gabled dormers decorate this house to form a brilliant whole structure.

Colors of the exterior woodwork have constantly changed, but even the smallest of details remain the same from when the house was first designed. The woodwork designs above the porch entrance are one of the most special details of the house, which has been kept the same over the years. The essence of the original design remains intact and its quirky character shines brightly in the neighborhood.



Perry-Cooper House

Though the Perry-Cooper House lacks the typical towers, turrets and conical roofs of a Victorian house and instead sports a French-inspired mansard roof, it is still as striking as the rest of the houses in Newtown. Not only does its deep burgundy and yellow coloring stand out, but also the elaborate wood carvings and roof shingles set it apart. The wood carvings that trace the porch contain a pattern that is accentuated by the details on the railings that surround it. Each window and dormer has a trim of the same wood carving as the porch, which ties this little detail together. The roof on this house uses a combination of both rectangular wood shingles and also fish-scale shingles to create a visually appealing contrast of shape and color. The face of the house uses horizontal siding which allows for the little details, like the wood carvings and roof shingles, to stand out.

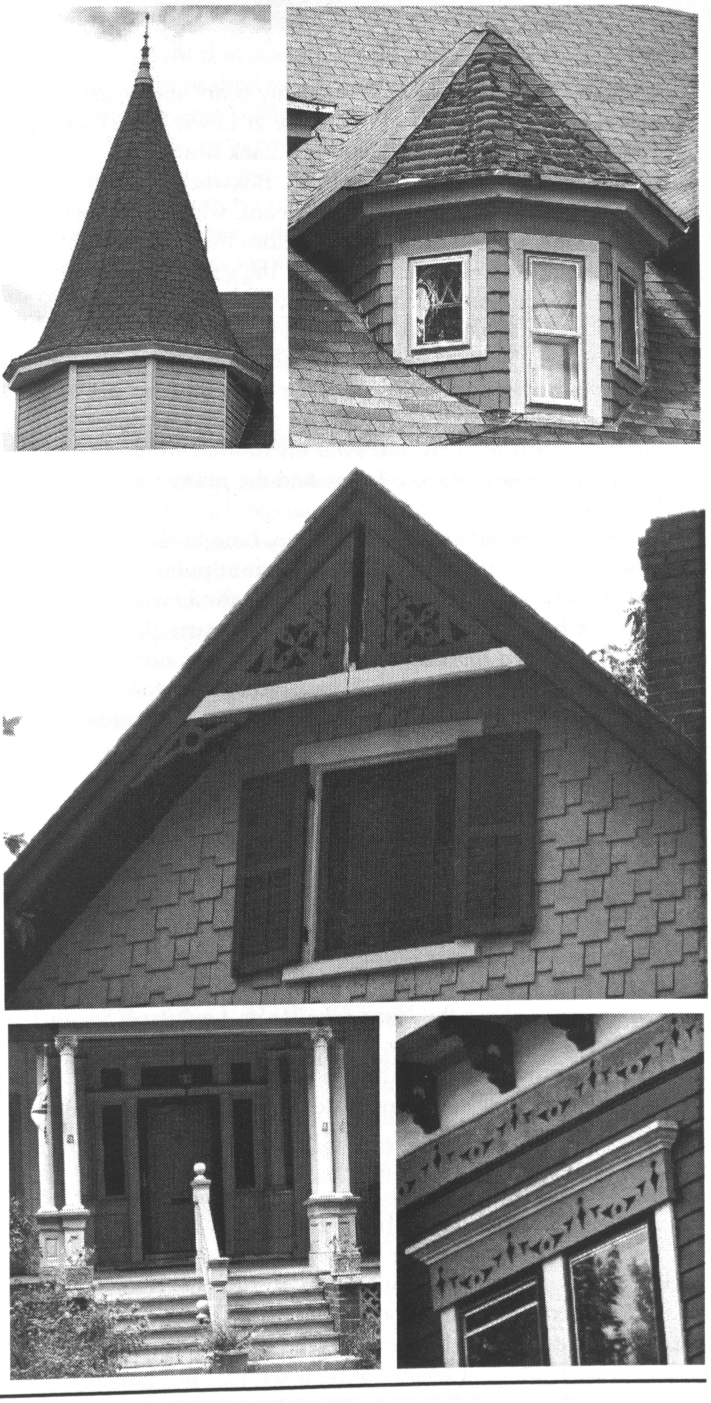


B. Frank Kennerly House

The B. Frank Kennerly House shows great visual appeal in the Victorian and Queen Anne sense because of all its contrasting features. The curving frame of the house, along with its wrap-around porch, leads to an abrupt switch into sharp geometric shapes and edges. The contrast is pronounced between the rounded left side of the house and the right side, which ends in an octagonal tower and pointed conical roof. The use of shingles is a prominent factor in the construction and look of this house as well. Fish-scale shingles cover the majority of the house, contrasted by horizontal siding. The contrast is made even more outstanding by the color choices made. To go along with the theme of opposites, the B. Frank Kennerly House is painted red and green, contrasting colors which make each feature pop.

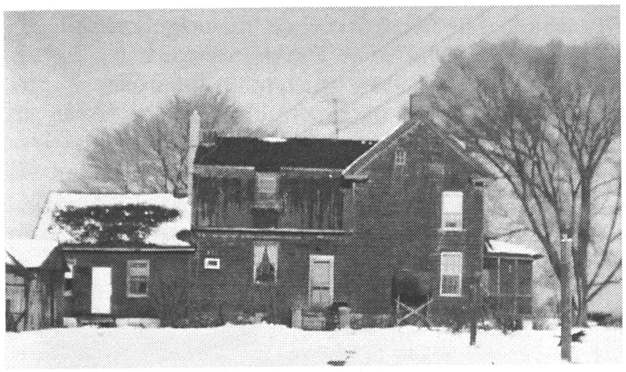
Although each separate house is unique, the neighborhood shows unity in its consistency of style. The streetscape is a beautiful variety of Victorian houses which make the streets colorful and alive. Newtown was the first residential neighborhood in Salisbury and continues to hold true to its historic and original character.

Note: Jessica Glazer, a communication arts major with a minor in art, is currently interning at the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture.



Lewis Wharf and the Lewis Wharf House

By Tom Bradshaw



Though it stood abandoned for many years and crops were planted within feet of it, the house at Lewis Wharf stood proudly on a knoll about 300 feet back from the Nanticoke River on the river's west bank. Boxwoods, flower gardens and majestic trees gave way to soybeans, wheat and corn. When one comes around the last turn before the long straightway heading east on Lewis Wharf Road, the structure captures the attention … and for me, my curiosity.

When I was a teenager going to visit my grandfather when he lived "down the wharf" with his nephew, I could sit at the dining table in my cousin's house and see the old home out in the field on its hill where it had stood for years, even centuries. My grandfather, his nephew and even my mother would often sit and talk about living in the old home and the many memories it held for them.

My great-grandfather, Tom Horsman, bought the farm in September 1919 from Sarah Marshall Lewis at public sale. Aunt Sarah, as she was known locally, had lived at the Lewis Wharf farm with her husband Levin since they were married. Levin Lewis had purchased his mother's and his sibling's interest in the farm in 1865. Records prior to this date refer to the farm as Elizabeth Donoho's or Donoho's Landing. Though steamboat service did not start for another 20 years or so after Levin Lewis purchased the farm, local history has it that a wharf existed there during the Civil War. Residents living in Vienna of an age to recall the war told of southern sympathizers wrapping the hooves of their horses in burlap so they could not give their owners away as they carried supplies after dark to boats at Lewis Wharf, there to deliver the supplies south to the Confederacy.

When the BC&A (Baltimore, Chesapeake and Atlantic Railway) started steamer service in the 1880s, "Lewis" was one of the many stops along the Nanticoke River. Levin and Sarah ran the farm and wharf until in 1900 Levin passed away. According to estate records at the Dorchester County courthouse, Levin Lewis died intestate, or without a will. There was a public sale to settle debts, after which Sarah Lewis continued to run the farm and wharf. In September 1919, at the behest of her children, a public sale was held to divest the family of its major landholdings, one being the wharf and "home farm" on the Nanticoke. At the sale, Tom Horsman was the winning bidder at $16,500 (quite a sum at the time). Horsman's wife was to have said, "My goodness, Tommie, we'll never pay for it." Maryland law at the time decreed that if a farm was purchased after July 1, it could not be taken up until January 1 of the following year. Horsman went over to the farm on January 1 only to find Aunt Sarah quietly rocking on the front porch. He didn't feel right making her move immediately, so possession was taken in February. Aunt Sarah wanted to end her days at the wharf and did not want to sell, but in order for the children to receive their part of their father's estate, the farm had to be sold.

A Look at the Old House

The cellar was only under the front section and it ran north and south. There was a 90-degree protrusion just off the center of the west side that was probably used as a wine cellar. The west wall of the cellar and foundation for the replacement part of the house were built on the inside of the original foundation. The remaining foundation was from the original construction, made in Flemish bond laid brick, a solid, continuous foundation. The floor of the cellar was also lined with brick.

The first floor had three rooms in the old section and front replacement. The house was laid out in an L-shape. Dimensions were approximately 20 feet wide. The front was approximately 50 feet long, north to south. In the middle were the hallway and stairs, an area about 10-feet wide. The north room was the parlor and the south room was a bedroom. On the west side was the closed-in stairway to the cellar. The west section was about 18 x 20 feet. This was the remaining part of the original house. On the west end of this room was the large cooking fireplace with a closet on the south side. On the north side was the entrance to the kitchen, but originally (as shown by a later discovery) it was a circular staircase to the bedroom above. A hole for the door was broken through the 24-inch brick wall for access to the kitchen.

The old kitchen, as we called it, was actually a house that had been moved up from the woods. It originally was placed about four feet from the brick end of the old house, with a breezeway between. It was lower than the rest of the house as there were two steps down from the center section to the kitchen. Sometime in the 1920s, Horsman closed in the breezeway and removed the large chimney on the west end that had a fireplace for cooking. A single room with a large pantry was placed where the chimney had been. In the northwest corner in the pantry was a closed-in stairway to the attic.

The second floor of the main house consisted of three bedrooms. In the front, replaced portion of the house, were two bedrooms with the stairway and hall between them; on the front of the hall was the closed-in stairway to the attic (or garret, as it was called). The third bedroom was accessed through the south bedroom. The two front bedrooms had flue access to the chimneys. The chimneys were built on the inside of the walls and were both rigged with mantels making them look like fireplaces.

The bedroom over the old section of the house was equipped with a small fireplace and closets on both sides. Both closets had small windows in the west end. In this room was the wooden boxing in the ceiling for the curtains of a trundle bed and master bed combination. It was to the right side as you entered the room. The floors were of wide boards, probably of pine. They were not painted so there must have been a carpet on the floor originally. This room was two steps higher than the bedrooms in the front of the house. Since the replacement front of the house was not as wide as the original, two-foot boards had been added to close the floor gap between them.

The exterior of the house was covered in cedar shingles, save the old kitchen and a room on the north side of the middle, or "original," section of the home. They were covered in asphalt shingle paper. The front section of the home was gable roofed with four windows or bays, of six-over-six sashes, across the front on both the first and second floors. The entrance was located on the second bay from the north and had a transom and sidelights. The attic or garret had two small windows in each end, one on each side of the chimneys. The middle section was of gambrel roof construction with a single shed roof dormer on the north and south sides.

The Wharf

Lewis Wharf consisted of a platform built on pilings over the water. One building at the south end of the platform, of frame construction, gable-roofed and roughly 25 x 35 feet, served as the warehouse for goods going to and from the wharf. Access to its floored loft was via a staircase in the northwest corner. On the north end of the loft was a door. This allowed goods to be hoisted up or lowered from this area. There were two windows on the south end of the loft. On the first floor large access doors on the east and west side of the building allowed easy ingress and egress from the wharf. From appearances it looks as if the building rested on a foundation when at the wharf's edge. In later years it was moved from its former location at the wharf to just up the hill by a large cedar tree. From then on it was used for everything from a granary to a fish house until it was dismantled in the late 1980s. On a low tide, the broken pilings that once held up the wharf can still be seen.

Tales From the Past

For years writers and historians have speculated about this house. Is it actually the "original" home on Weston, or did it burn in the revolution or even in the war of 1812? We will never know. After my grandfather passed, I still used to go "down the wharf" and visit with his nephew Frank Horsman who was also the family historian. Frank used to relate stories that were told to him by his grandmother Edith Horsman about an African-American woman known only as "Aunt Amy." The Horsmans lived on the neighboring farm to the north of the Lewis Farm, having moved there in 1904. Aunt Amy used to come and help Mrs. Horsman with the household chores. During this time, details of the Lewis House were much grander than its present appearance. A tale of a British soldier being killed on a hidden staircase was also told.

Through research, I discovered the 60 acres known today as the Lewis Wharf farm were laid out separate from Weston. In Charles Rider's last will and testament he bequeathed to his sister, Anne Billings, and her husband, James, "The parcel whereon his premises are." The land included 60 acres and the will was dated October 20, 1741. The property later passed to the daughter of James and Anne Billings. Anne Billings later married Henry Steele. The 1783 tax assessment shows for Anne Steele her part of Weston as including one old dwelling house, one good barn, one storehouse, one kitchen and one quarter.

The Steele's owned the land until 1803 when James Steele sold the land to John Smith. The farm was sold three times before Alfred Lewis purchased it in 1837. Each land transfer up to this point referred to it as being the former residence of James Steele. Alfred Lewis died in 1842 intestate; a commission was set up to divide the lands. Alfred's widow, who had remarried to C. Perry Donoho, was given the "widow's dower" or the Nanticoke Farm as it was called by the family, laid out for 60 acres. Elizabeth Donoho remained at the farm until her son Levin bought everyone's interest in the farm and other lands. At least from the records we know that a home has been on this land since the 1740s. The old home saw many births and deaths over the years in the Billings family, who were possibly the first residents up to the Horsman family, who were the last to occupy the home.

One Last Remnant and a Couple of Secrets Revealed

In the late 1960s, a bedchamber was removed from the house at Lewis Wharf. No one had lived there for several years and it was deemed that no one would probably live there again. After it was removed, it was taken to Baltimore and reconstructed at the Baltimore Museum of Art and is now on permanent display, being a part of the period room collection. As time went on, the house began to deteriorate. The cedar shingles once covering the home had begun giving way to the once beautiful white weatherboarding that was the original exterior of the house. One winter in the late 1980s, after several days of a hard northwest wind, a perfect outline of fragmented brick the exact width of the house and 20 feet longer was discovered. Also around this time it was noticed that the roof had been leaking for a while. Because of this, the many years of wallpaper and whitewash had been removed from the walls. In the northwest corner of the room in the middle section of the home the outline of a circular staircase had been also revealed.

A Tragic End for a Noble Home

Years of neglect had left the house in bad disrepair. The roof had started caving in and the floors were rotting; it was not safe anymore to go inside. On a February day in 1990, it was decided to burn the house down. After the fire, all that remained was the brick wall and chimney of the middle section of the home. Some of the handmade bricks were retrieved by members of the Pemberton Foundation and used in the restoration work of Pemberton Hall. A hole was dug and the remains of the home were buried. Today, traveling down Lewis Wharf Road, one can only envision the old home where it once stood.

Livelihood, Hearth and Home:
"Down Below" in Dorchester County

By Phillip Hesser

Writing about "tongmen" in 1894, Charles H. Stevenson is struck with what we would now call the sustainable livelihood of those who mined the oyster rocks of Maryland:

> All are not entirely dependent on oysters for support, the greater number engaging also in agricultural pursuits, while many of the remaining find occasional employment in the various industries of nearby cities. Most of them own small homes and an acre or two of ground which constitutes a garden … There are few workmen in America more independent than these.

Reading this statement in reverse, it is interesting to note that the independence of those people who were to become known as watermen within two decades is associated most directly with their owning small houses and an acre or two of land. The small houses that served as the anchor of this sustainability can be found today across the Eastern Shore in Chesapeake Bay country and in particular "Down Below" the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in southern Dorchester County. A quick look at these houses—their characteristics, the variations for expanding on them and their continued use in the present—offers telling testimony to what contributed to sustainable livelihoods on the bay at the advent of the 20th century and to what degree those livelihoods achieve sustainability in the first decade of the 21st.

At the time of Stevenson's observations, the land Down Below in Dorchester was entering into its second century of European-style settlement. Wooden houses built with wrought framing, planking, clapboards and shakes had supplanted whatever cabins had served as the first stage of housing in the area. Loblolly pine and some oak and cedar would have been available to the waterman—whether on his own property or within a short distance by barge or wagon. Boat builders in the community would have adapted their skills in designing structures and hewing wood to create houses that would have been solid inside and outside, recalling the soundness that makes a boat seaworthy.

These components (in addition to special expenditures for ordering metal stoves and building brick chimneys) would have required a significant commitment of resources, including land, materials and labor. While land and some timber might have come from family resources, often handed down from a parent's holdings, other inputs would require commitments in the form of cash, barter (in services or product) or credit. One might expect that construction would have depended on savings and informal or basic written agreements—within families or between the prospective householder and the supplier/builder. The parties would have entered into these arrangements in the same spirit as they carried on the business of oystering, engaging in business with their relatives and neighbors as they had for several generations.

The basic house that arose from these transactions was what might be called for convenience the "one-on-one" house (see photo 1 and illustration 1). This two-story house consisted of a ground floor of one large room (which served as kitchen, dining room and parlor) and staircase (with pantry area under the stairs) and a second story often divided into two bedrooms. Front and back doors gave easy access to family and company. Windows, placed wherever possible around chimneys and other structural elements, gave light and ventilation. A wood stove was used for cooking and heating the entire house. An indoor hand pump in some houses would have saved family members from trips to the water pump outside. A gabled roof offered a crawl space for storage of personal effects.

The one-on-one provided a householder and family with a highly efficient setting for daily life. Its small footprint would fit easily into the long narrow lots that sometimes subdivided larger holdings in places Down Below, where the "tumps" (the long narrow islands originally holding stands of loblolly pine in the marshes of southern Chesapeake Bay) limited the amount of usable land. In winter, the one-on-one made efficient use of energy, keeping the principal living space heated with one stove and taking at least a small bit of chill out of the air in the second story bedrooms—not enough to make them comfortable on the coldest nights, but at least to make them bearable with enough blankets and quilts. In summer, the windows on several sides permitted airflow and natural ventilation, a place where the breezes arising in the interchange between the land and sometimes several bodies of water (for example, Chesapeake Bay and Fishing Bay Down Below) moved the air almost all of the time.

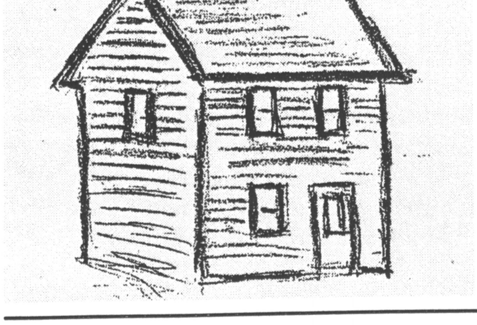


Illustration 1

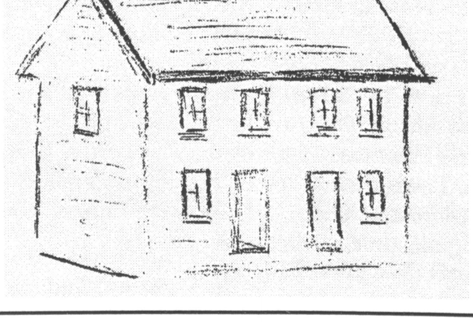


Illustration 2

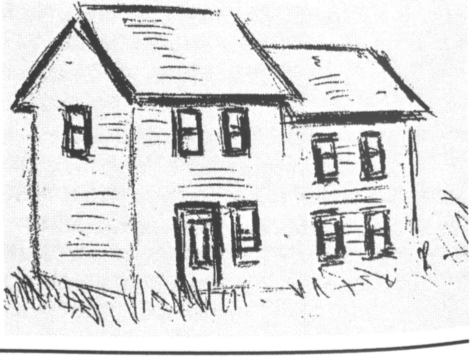


Illustration 3

Illustrations by Roy Todd.

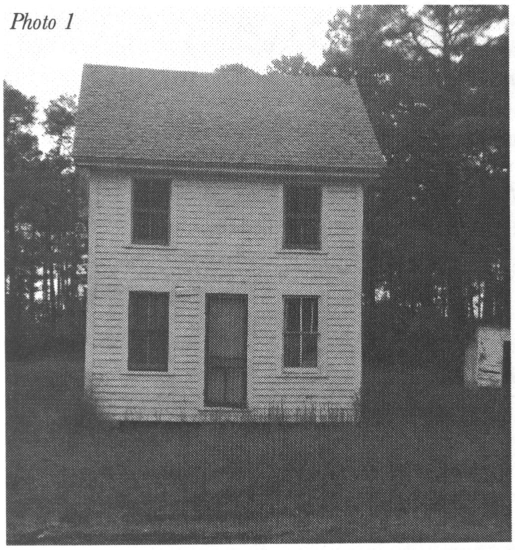


Photo 1

The basic one-on-one served the needs of many small families and continues to do so into the present day. At the same time, it could also serve as a "starter" that could be expanded in many ways to suit the growing needs and means of a family over the years. The most common options included "doubling" the house with another one- or two-story unit, building successive one-story and two-story additions to the house to make a "telescope" house, extending the house with a colonnade and kitchen, and adding to the house a one-sided or wrap-around porch.

What might be called the "doubler" house (see illustration 2) essentially added another one-story room or two-story one-on-one to the existing house. The doubler offered the same architectural elements as the original house, providing the same number of doors and windows on each floor and usually being heated with another stove. To join the two parts of the doubler, a passage or passages were cut between the original one-on-one and the addition so that the foot of the stairs and upstairs landing would give access to either side of the house. (In addition, the pantry might be shortened to make another passage under the upstairs landing on the ground floor of the house.) The doubler added much-needed elbowroom to a family house, giving the householder a separate parlor for receiving guests and providing the family with a respite from a hot kitchen in summer. The second story could serve as a master bedroom or be subdivided to make additional bedrooms for a growing family. Sometimes, the new second story would be a bit higher than the original one-on-one (see illustration 3), giving the family a raised ceiling in the new section and affording a more comfortable night's sleep for the family members there. More often than not, however, the two-story doubler retained the original roofline, presenting to the viewer a balanced and efficient home. In the tradition of the best family homes in U.S. history, it spoke volumes in its practical elegance.

The well-documented "telescope" home (see illustration 4) added one more element to the doubler. Often with a separate one-story kitchen built off the other side of the original one-on-one, thus creating three successively higher rooflines, it had the look of an unfurled collapsible spyglass. When the new room became a kitchen, this arrangement most likely made for a dedicated dining room in the former kitchen/dining area that would be less affected by the heat produced from cooking. These considerations also contributed to the development of the colonnade house (illustration 5, found often in Virginia's Delmarva Peninsula), where the one-story kitchen addition was actually a separate building, eventually to be connected with a covered passageway or colonnade. These styles gave the family more room and comfort for dining in summer as a trade for slightly less efficiency in heating in winter, since it required another stove dedicated to cooking.

The final principal variation involved adding a porch to a one-on-one (illustration 6) and more often to a doubler. Screened to keep out the mosquitoes, greenhead flies and deerflies of summer, the porch gave the family extra living space for summer entertaining of visitors and family activities, where people could gather in the evenings in comfort. In the case of the one-on-one, the householder could afford additional living space at a comparatively modest price for the time of year when a combination kitchen and parlor could be quite uncomfortable with a large number of people. In the course of the 20th century, these spaces were winterized with windows so they could be used for several months in the fall and spring, taking advantage of the morning or afternoon sun for heat.

In the course of the 20th century, the independence of the waterman was chipped away from several directions. Falling populations of oysters, and eventually crabs, fish and other species, reduced his income. Increasing energy costs stemming from the adoption of fossil fuels for heating, cooking, machinery and car and boat engines and of electricity for lighting, sometimes cooking and heating, tools and eventually air conditioning further cut into the balance sheet—especially as energy prices skyrocketed in the final quarter of the century. Finally, changes in the land caused by the sinking of the Delmarva Peninsula and the rise in sea level turned tumps once planted in orchards and garden plots into stretches of waterbush, reducing the land available for producing food and fodder. At the same time, land prices buoyed by the economy and "come-here" buyers added to the value of houses, wielding the two-edged sword that may have produced gains for families who owned their homes "free and clear," but often required mortgages of younger families just starting out. Families could and can sustain a livelihood in these conditions—especially when a spouse or other family members find work in town and add extra income

Illustration 4

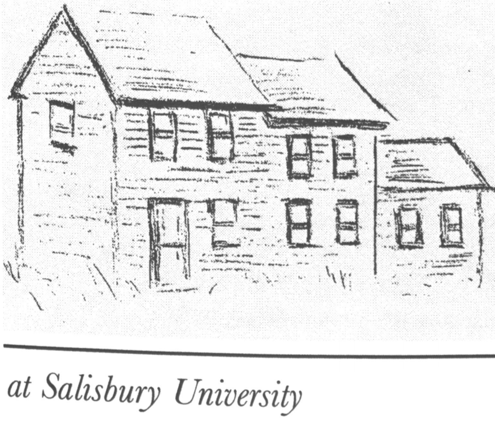


Illustration 5

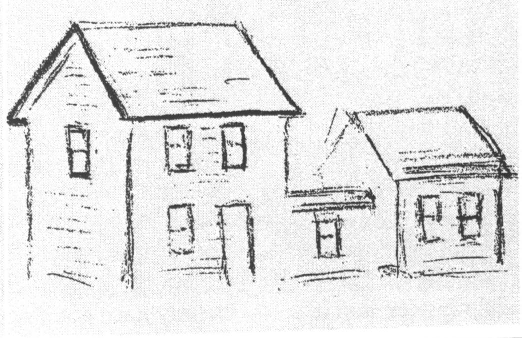
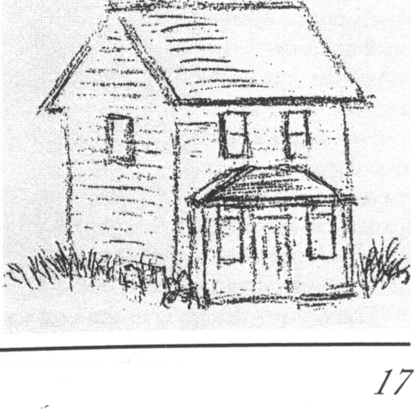


Illustration 6



to the equation. At the same time, consumer or mortgage debt, a lean year, natural disaster or a family emergency could combine in various ways to drive a family into bankruptcy.

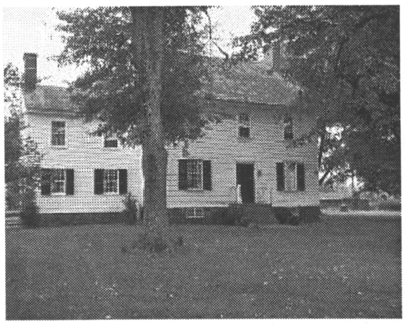
As these changes have taken place over the past century, the one-on-one, the doubler and their variations have served as a haven for the waterman and his neighbors, as well as an illustration of the ingenuity found in the people Down Below and elsewhere on the Shore. On the one hand, the oil tanks and gas bottles tethered to the houses symbolize the universal dependence on fossil fuels of the modern age. At the same time, these fundamentally efficient homes have also changed positively with the times, receiving double-pane windows and storm doors, insulation and house wrap and more energy efficient heating and appliances. The efficient lines and footprint of these houses ensure that—when well-maintained—they have the potential to see their inhabitants through new generations in conditions that promise to strain livelihood and sustainability even further. In the spirit of the pragmatism that built these houses a century ago, we might expect to see white roofs, passive and photovoltaic solar, a new generation of wood-burning furnaces and ways to harvest wind and biofuels, as these technologies become more accessible to people Down Below—whether through policy or the forces of the marketplace.

The "born-heres" of Down Below in Dorchester County in many cases trace their families to the nearby islands of the bay (Holland, Barren, Bloodsworth and Lower Hooper islands), whose conditions became untenable at the turn of the 20th century as water levels rose, land became degraded and erosion tore away at the limited plots of the inhabitants. Many of the people who moved to the mainland Down Below brought with them their houses, sometimes broken apart as lumber but often more or less intact on barges. This was a recognition of much that was of value to the oystermen and watermen who did so. It was an economy, a way of cutting losses and lessening indebtedness. It was an acknowledgement of the durability of homes built from the inside out by boat builders, structures that would survive the trip by barge and ox-drawn sledges to provide housing to generations to come. Most importantly, perhaps, it was testimony to the importance of home and hearth, of a haven whose lights served as a beacon before dawn when the watermen left in their boats and after dusk when they would check on their shedding floats, of a living space to shelter and raise a family and of a spot in the kitchen or on the porch to keep company with friends and neighbors. In a changing world, those values have not changed in the white clapboards and green shutters that greet passers-by Down Below, or in the people who make their homes there.

Note: Phillip Hesser has taught at universities in the United States and two African countries and has directed leadership and educational fellowship programs for the United Nations and a U.S. nonprofit organization. He is currently steeping himself in the recollections of his neighbors and the history of the Eastern Shore in preparation for his book *Staying in Limbo: Life and Livelihood on the Tumps and Marshes of the Chesapeake*.

Liberty Hall

The following is a brief preliminary sketch of Liberty Hall written by Col. Ernest L. McLendon, owner from 1948 to 1956.



1795. Chiseled in the bricks of the main chimney of Liberty Hall, this date is assumed to be when the house was completed. James Curtis probably commenced building and Sarah Curtis, his widow, completed it. The details of construction and style of interior trim are definitely of that period or earlier. Some notable construction features are the sills above the first floor, which, instead of lapping over partitions, run the entire width of the house in a single piece. The unsupported stair rail leading to the second floor is as solid as the day it was built.

The interior of the house, exclusive of the east wing, added about 1840, is believed to be exactly as originally built with a few minor changes indicated hereafter. The kitchen was originally located on the west side and connected to the house by a gallery. Entrance to the house from the dining gallery was through a door of the northwest room on the first floor. When the east wing was built, it consisted of two rooms on the first floor, a kitchen and a dining room. On the second floor of the wing above the dining room was a bedroom. The kitchen occupied the easternmost part of the east wing, taken down in 1940 because the owner did not want to go to the expense of restoring the kitchen chimney. At that time, too, the dining room of the east wing was put to use as a kitchen.

The home's design is in the best Colonial manner, and it is remarkable that the interior paneling and trim of the original structure have come through all these years unscarred. It would be hard to imagine a more gracefully designed and proportioned mantel than the one in the living room (once called the "great hall"). The large box locks of the doors have disappeared—these were valuable. The double French doors on the north and south sides were especially made and installed in 1940 to replace solid wooden doors in order to admit more light. New window sashes were also installed in 1940 in exactly the same style as the originals, and at the same time new weather boarding on the exterior and new single roofs were added.

The original kitchen and dining gallery, located on the west side of the main house, were removed when the new kitchen was constructed in the east wing in 1840, and the old gallery was converted to use as a granary and moved to its present location just in front of the new barn. The gallery's old entrance door was converted into a window. New paneling that had been filled in beneath the window sill can be clearly seen for two reasons, by the difference between the room panels and the two small panels, and the seams in the panel frame.

The curbed well near the southwest corner is the original well, most conveniently sited for the original west side kitchen. This well has never been known to go dry and has given a plentiful supply of good water when other farm wells in the vicinity have gone dry during prolonged droughts.

◆◆

The Other Ross Mansion

By Emalu Myer Simpson with Research Contributed by Bill Collison

Like many who enjoy history, I welcome the opportunity to tour old houses and hear about the families who once lived in them. Several historic homes on Delmarva have been lovingly restored and preserved. Once the homes of the most prosperous and successful citizens in the region, their histories are well known and the source of great pride to their owners. I have also spent many years living in two 19th century farmhouses. These houses were the homes of less prosperous citizens, but they have withstood multiple generations of families and changing times. Even when an old house falls to ruin it can serve as a good starting point for historical research.

Several years ago, one house in particular caught my attention and piqued my curiosity. I had spent the better part of the day reading Sussex County, Delaware, Orphans Court records. The records involved families who lived in the Northwest Fork Hundred of Sussex County, Delaware, near the Maryland/Delaware border with Caroline County. I decided to drive near the land described in the court records to see what it might look like today.

It is not always easy to pinpoint the exact location of farms that existed in the 18th century. The Northwest Fork of the Nanticoke River for which this district takes its name is known as Marshyhope Creek today. The area is difficult to research because records for the same parcel of land can be found in Dorchester and Caroline counties, Maryland, as well as Sussex County, Delaware, depending on the era of research. Even today, some of the area farms have deeds recorded in both Maryland and Delaware since they straddle the border. As I surveyed the general area, I searched for landmarks that might serve as a focal point for further research and help to orient me to the location of long ago events.

I was not disappointed. As I turned on to the Atlanta Road from Sand Hill Road (known as Noble and Hrynko roads in Maryland), I spied an old brick structure which I was sure had an ancient past. Overgrown with ivy and with a tin roof more suited to a barn, it did not appear to have been used as a residence for several years. I had little doubt that it had stood on that site for a long, long time.

By consulting a recent tax map and interviewing a local resident familiar with the community, I learned that the house now sits on a small tract of land of fewer than seven acres. It shares a lot with a 20th-century farmhouse and outbuildings. As is common today, the landowner who farms the nearby land does not live on the farm and sold the adjacent buildings several years ago. The tax records for Sussex County provided a deed reference from which a full title search could commence. My goal was to determine when and by whom the house was constructed and the name of the patent for the land on which the house was built.

In 1867 the farm and house were purchased by a man from Michigan named Nicholas Fratt. Found on the Atlas of the State of Delaware, published in1868 by Pomeroy & Beers, the house is identified as the home of "N Eratt." Although the home sits in Delaware, it is identified on the 1875 map of Caroline County published by John B. Isler as the home of "N Pratt."

Nicholas Fratt was only one of several out-of-state real estate investors who acquired land in the Northwest Fork Hundred during the last half of the 19th century. While searching titles to neighboring properties, I observed that several farms in the community were purchased and held by northern land speculators around the time of the Civil War. In some cases, the land was sold through a land agent. It is possible the same land agents learned about local real estate while working for the railroad, which arrived in nearby Seaford, Delaware, by the end of 1856.

The period of land speculation by outsiders followed closely behind a similar period of land speculation by local businessmen. Before Nicholas Fratt, the farm had been owned by Isaac K. Wright and Joseph Vickers, men with longtime roots in the community. The grantor and grantee indices for Dorchester, Caroline and Sussex counties reveal that both men purchased numerous farms during the first half of the 19th century. They added to their land holdings by buying farmland

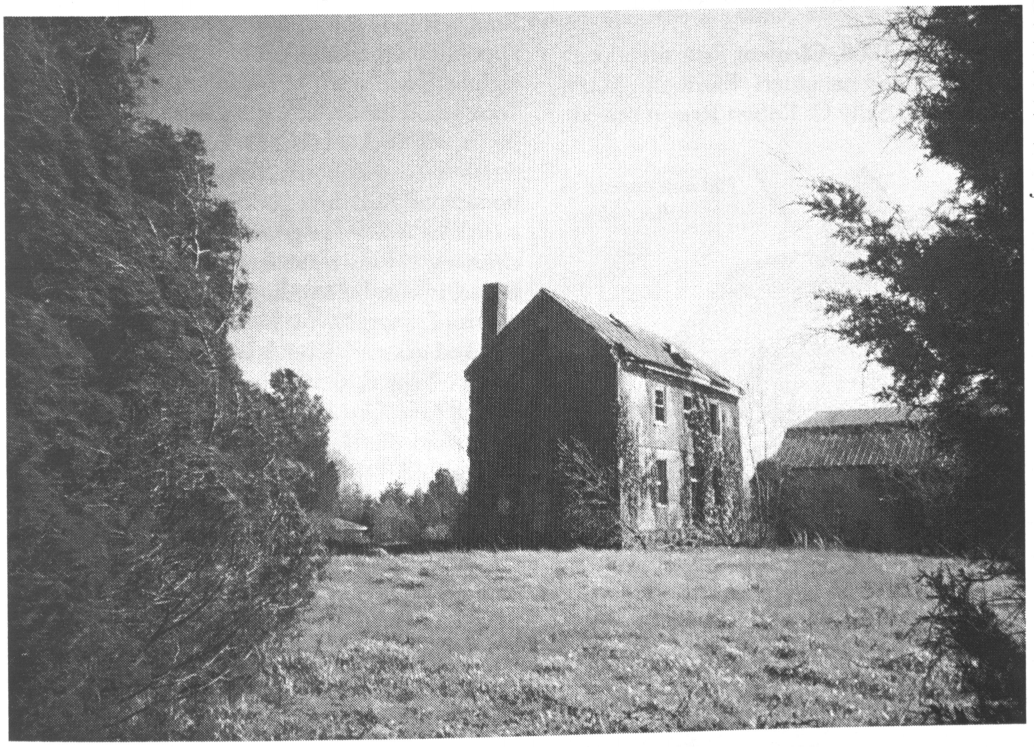


Photo courtesy of Emalu Simpson

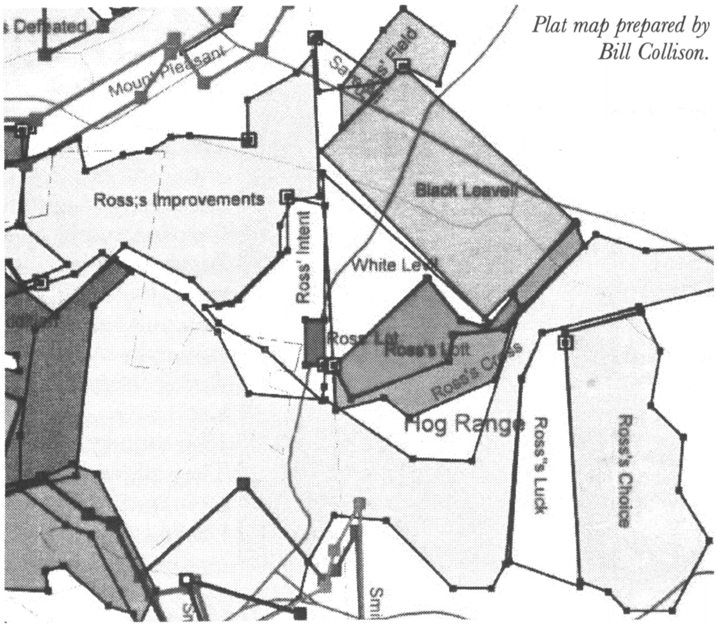
from the heirs of their deceased neighbors or at sheriff's sales of foreclosed properties. As they were acquired, the farms were held as an investment and often rented to tenant farmers. The tenants were sometimes the same families who had once owned the land.

On May 5, 1860, when the farm was purchased by Richard Greenwell from the heirs of Isaac K. Wright, the real estate was described as the "Hitch Farm with the mansion, buildings, houses and outhouses thereon belonging." The 1860 deed confirms that a house of some consequence existed on the site prior to the Civil War.

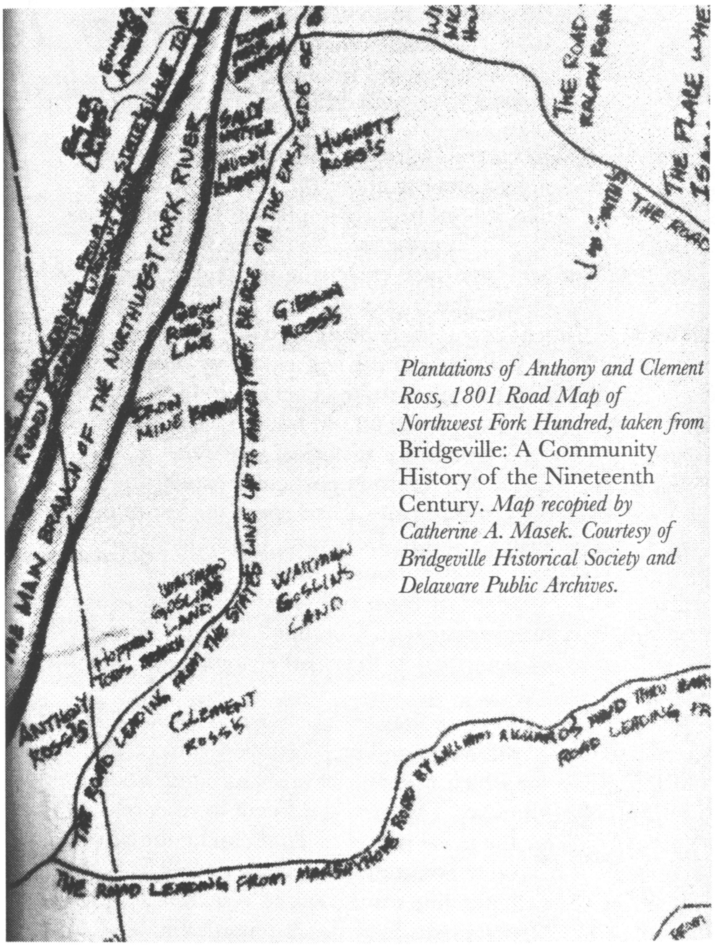
On November 15, 1823, William Hitch and Nancy, his wife, sold several tracts of land to Joseph Vickers containing "all the farm and lands whereon the said Hitch now lives." The tract names listed included Save All, Ross's Field, Black Level, White Level, Ross's Lott, Ross's Cross, Hogg Range, Poplar Level Improved, Ross's Luck and Ross's Choice. The same land had been purchased by William Hitch from Garey Hitch on July 9, 1819 and from William Bell and his wife, Maria, January 1, 1820. In the deed from Garey Hitch, the land is described as "formerly the property of Clement Ross deceased and from said deceased to his son Robert Ross." The land description references "the dwelling plantation whereon the said Willam Hitch now lives." Garey Hitch purchased the same farm from Robert Ross on July 26, 1816. The deed references "the parcel of land which was devised to Robert Ross by his father, Clement Ross ... including the said Clement's dwelling house while he lived."

According to research published by the Hitch family historian, Mike Hitch, William and Garey Hitch were married to daughters of Clement Ross. By 1830, William Hitch and his wife, Nancy (Ross), left Delaware and like many others from the neighborhood settled in Ohio. The changing political, social and economic climate following the American Revolution caused an exodus of people from the Northwest Fork Hundred. Neighbors and families traveled together settling new communities in the expanding western territories.

In his will made January 10, 1808, Clement Ross mentions his wife, Sarah; his son, Robert; and daughters, Elizabeth, Mary, Lovey Adams, Nancy, Maria and Sally C. Robert Ross received 264 acres of land including Clement's "dwelling plantation and improvements." On July 20, 1808, the Orphans Court for Sussex County, Delaware, ordered the valuation of the lands of Robert Ross, a minor son of Clement Ross, deceased. The court-appointed appraisers observed "one brick house, thirty by eighteen, two stories high in very good repair." There was also "one wood house, one story, adjoining said brick house, eighteen by sixteen with a cellar flush under the same, in very good repair; one milk house, twelve by ten, in good repair; one small house and garden in good repair; one logged smoke house, twelve by twelve, in good repair; one logged kitchen with brick chimney, twenty by sixteen, in middling repair; one carriage house, twelve by ten, in good repair; three logged stables under one roof, thirty by twelve, in middling repair; one framed planked granary, twenty by thirteen, in good repair; two corn houses, logged, sixteen by eight, each in good repair; one old logged house, twenty by sixteen, in very bad repair; one garden, thirty-four panels nailed in middling repair; fifteen panels post & railing round the yard in bad repair; three hundred and eight apple trees; one hundred and sixty-six peach trees; three thousand four hundred and forty-two panels of fence in middling repair." This confirms that a two-story brick home existed on the farm in 1808.



Plat map prepared by Bill Collison.



Plantations of Anthony and Clement Ross, 1801 Road Map of Northwest Fork Hundred, taken from Bridgeville: A Community History of the Nineteenth Century. *Map recopied by Catherine A. Masek. Courtesy of Bridgeville Historical Society and Delaware Public Archives.*

On November 10, 1806, Clement Ross signed a certificate of manumission declaring that he was convinced of the impropriety and injustice of Negro slavery and ordered all of his slaves to be free at staggered times and with conditions. A slave named Honour was to be freed December 5 except one day each week for the next five years during which she was to wash and mend her children's clothes. In the same document, Clement ordered that his heirs provide a small house and garden spot on the east side of his dwelling plantation for Honour to live. An adult male slave named Labido was to serve for a three-year term with wages of 12 dollars a year. An adult woman named Annass was to be free at the end of the next year. Also mentioned were 10 children. The boys, Levin, Jerry, Daniel, John and Henry were to be free at age 25. The girls, Sidney, Rose, Lydia and Ritty were to be free at age 21. Except for Levin, who is not mentioned, the slave children were divided among the heirs of Clement Ross in his will of 1808.

Clement may have been strongly influenced in his feelings against slavery by his proximity to a religious sect known as the Nicholites or "new Quakers." Several families nearby were Nicholites including his close neighbors the Wrights. Clement may have also been influenced by his neighbor, the Methodist evangelist, White Brown, a contemporary who preached against the practice of slavery at nearby Brown's Chapel.

From a deed made November 24, 1797, we learn that Clement Ross was the son of Anthony Ross and that the land on which the brick house sits was deeded to Clement by his father. The 1797 deed describes eight tracts of land. Of those, seven were granted on Delaware patents and were acquired by Anthony Ross after the Mason and Dixon line was finalized. The oldest survey was granted in Maryland for a tract of 100 acres known as Black Levil. The deed references the history of Black Levil as follows, "originally surveyed on January 12, 1727 by James Hayes, Deputy Surveyor of Dorchester County, Maryland, in pursuance of a warrant from the Right Honorable, the Proprietor of Maryland, granted unto a certain Thomas Smith, who sold and assigned the same unto a certain Thomas Brown." The meanders of the Hopindoes (hopping does) Branch referenced in the 1727 Maryland survey can best be seen today by satellite.

After studying the Delaware and Maryland surveys and patents, I learned that the house sits on the former Maryland patent Black Levil. In 1793 Anthony Ross had surveyed a tract of land called "Rosses Luck." The certificate of survey completed by William Stayton, Deputy Surveyor for Sussex County, describes the bounds as follows: "Beginning at a marked white oak standing on the north side of a swamp, a small distance to the southward of a road and about 1/2 mile to the south eastward of Clement Ross's dwelling house ..." This document verifies that a dwelling existed on the site as early as 1793 while it was still the property of Anthony Ross.

Anthony Ross first appears in the land records of Dorchester County on September 1, 1761, when he purchased the tract Safford's or Stafford's Fortune. This tract is the likely location of his dwelling plantation and is pictured on an 1801 road map opposite the home of his son, Clement. At first Anthony is identified as a cooper (barrel maker). He is one of several men who followed the same profession in the region. Barrels were necessary to store tobacco and grains for transport to market. The prevalence of this trade along the banks of the Nanticoke is evidence that the region was heavily involved in commerce. Rich in natural resources, today the house sits near the Idylwild Wildlife Management Area which is devoted not only to the preservation of wild life habitat, but also to forest conservation. During the last half of the 18th century and early 19th century, the cripples of the upper Nanticoke were home to several mills, a tannery, an iron mine, an iron forge (bloomery), a shipyard and logging operations.

Throughout the next 50 years, Anthony Ross acquired additional tracts of land near Safford's Fortune and in later records he is identified as a planter. His plantation was re-surveyed several times adding adjacent vacant land. The patents recorded in Caroline County are named Ross's Meadow and Ross's Improvements.

In 1766, John and Sarah Stafford issued a confirmatory deed to Anthony Ross for the tract Safford's Fortune. The deed gives the location of the tract "a little below the dwelling plantation of Charles McKeel." On November 16, 1742, Charles McKeel purchased the tract known as Black Levil. This deed indicates that a dwelling existed on Black Levil prior to the one constructed by Clement Ross. Anthony Ross purchased the tract Black Levil from the heirs of Charles McKeel December 29, 1770. It does not seem likely that the brick home, which was described in very good condition in 1808, existed prior to 1770. Perhaps the prior dwelling of Charles McKeel is the old logged house in very bad repair observed in the 1808 appraisal.

The brick house as it stands today is said to have a unique diagonal fireplace similar to ones observed in the Carroll House in Federalsburg and which was once observed in the former Liden House at Liden's Venture (now demolished). Both the Carroll House and parts of Liden's Venture are dated circa1790. The records seem to support a date of construction for the dwelling of Clement Ross around this same time period

With every new piece of information I discover about the lives of the early inhabitants of this hidden by-way of Delmarva, I am only made more curious. I now realize that the house has served the very purpose I had hoped. It has become a gateway to history. The brick and mortar which once contained the long ago hopes and dreams of a young man for the future now stand as a monument to the past.

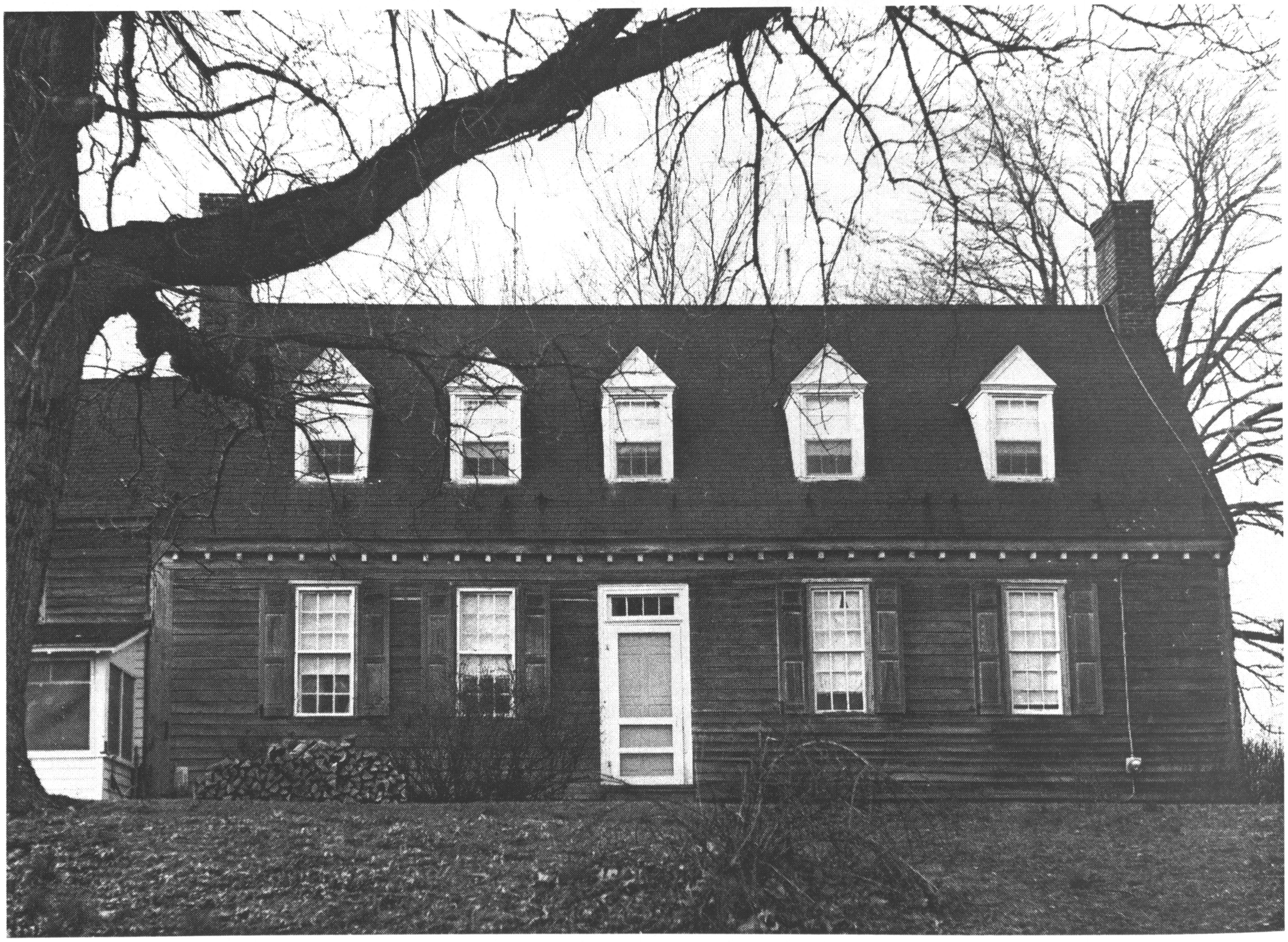
Emalu Simpson is a family history researcher with deep local roots.

The Young's Purchase farmhouse, story on page 6.

Long Hill: A History

Reprinted from Collection of Wicomico County Histories

By Anne Kennerly Morris Clay, 1972



Long Hill, the original name of a 17th century land grant, is situated in Wicomico County in the Wetipquin neighborhood on the southerly side of the road leading from the then Salisbury-Nanticoke road to Wetipquin ferry, Wetipquin Creek bounding the property on the south. The parcel, consisting of approximately 201 acres, is presently owned by members of the Hambury family, who have had more or less continuous ownership since 1884, when Thomas Hambury bought it from Dr. Cadmus Dashiell.

In the 1897 tax records in the basement of the Wicomico County courthouse, it may be seen that Hambury heirs owned a tract of 273 acres with improvements on the north side of Wetipquin Creek, known as "Cadmus Dashiell Farm," and assessed at $2,843. The Atlas of 1877 in the courthouse shows a Dr. K. Dashiell as owning land and a dwelling on the north side of Wetipquin Creek. Dr. Dashiell, born on November 1, 1813, was the son of Matthias and Rebecca Emmet Whitelock Dashiell. He received his degree in medicine from the University of Maryland in 1835 and was a prosperous member of both Somerset and Wicomico counties, as may be seen from his extensive land transactions. His family, the Dashiells, has owned Long Hill since the early days of colonization.

On file in the land records of Somerset County, Maryland, is a deed to Cadmus in 1835 from his mother, Rebecca Dashiell, upon the death of his father Matthias and also a deed from the commissioners to settle his father's estate: Robert Stewart, Benjamin Dashiell, Levin Walter and Jesse Walter. There is no apparent record of either a deed or a will whereby Matthias Dashiell received the property; however, part of Long Hill was deeded to Robert Stewart, possibly a distant cousin of Matthias, by deed from Benjamin Dashiell in 1835 and by deed from George Robertson and John Anderson, commissioners to settle the estate of Alexander Stewart, in 1816. This Robert Stewart, referred to as "Colonel Stewart of White Haven," owned several tracts of land, including Long Hill, as is shown on a plat in case #9246 of the Chancery Records to settle his estate. Long Hill is also mentioned in Chancery Case B 159/353 in 1840 when Robert Stewart's lands were sold after his death to pay debts. Benjamin Dashiell had also received his portion of Long Hill from the above commissioners in 1817. Alexander Stewart, who died July 22, 1810, and is buried on the second terrace of graves at Long Hill, was the son of John Stewart and most probably had received his portion of the land after the death of said John, before 1799. This assumption has been made in the Dashiell Family Records, though again there is no record of either a deed or a will in Somerset County or in the Hall of Records in Annapolis.

The tax records of 1798 show that Alexander Stewart owned several pieces of property in Nanticoke Hundred, all having dwellings and outbuildings. The house in which he lived on "Tipkin" Creek was a one-story, wood dwelling house, 68' x 20', with eight windows 44" x 28" and three windows 34" x 20". On the property there were also a cook house, milk house, smoke house, stable with side shed, carriage house and poultry house, all of assessed value, $750. This one-acre bit of land was in all likelihood part of a 193-acre farm owned and occupied by Alexander Stewart on "Tipkin" Creek. From these tax rolls, it may be also seen that Alexander was a slave-owner, having charge of 67 slaves.

It is certain from the records of Somerset County that John Stewart, son of Rebecca Stewart Dashiell* and Alexander Stewart, received 150 acres of Long Hill by the will of Matthias Dashiell in 1744. The Assessment of 1783 in the Hall of Records, Annapolis, shows the 150-acre tract of Long Hill in Nanticoke Hundred being owned by John Stewart, who played an influential part in the community in the beginning days of the new nation. A signer of the Proclamation of the Freemen of Maryland July 26, 1775, he was one of the Justices of the Peace who formed county courts at the first organization of state government in 1777. Commissioned in July 1778, he served as colonel of the Salisbury Battalion and was one of four men from the delegation of Somerset County to sign the then Ratification of the United States Constitution at the state convention of 1788. John Stewart was engaged in partnership in trade with Levin Gale and Henry Jackson, the firm being known as Gale, Jackson and Stewart. John married Elizabeth Dashiell, his first cousin and a sister of the last-mentioned Matthias Dashiell in 1767 and is buried at Long Hill. His tombstone there states, "Here lies buried Colonel John Stewart of Revolutionary War fame."

It is not entirely clear how Matthias Dashiell, a shipwright who never married, came by the property but he probably inherited it from his brother James who died in 1734. Again, this is the assumption made in the Dashiell family records, though no basis on record can be found. But Matthias is listed, along with William Dashiell, in the inventory account of James Dashiell, as next of kin. It is on record that James inherited 150 acres of Long Hill, this portion being the lower one-half of a tract, from his father Robert Dashiell, who died September 22, 1677, at Tipqueen, a son of James and Ann Dashiell. The Dashiell family records state that there was a dwelling on this lower half, though the will itself does not say as much. The will does show, however, that a certain Robert Dashiell, son of the aforesaid Robert, inherited the upper part of "Long Hill" along with the dwelling in which Elizabeth Collier lived.

The senior Robert Dashiell, a slave owner, had inherited 300 acres of Long Hill from his mother Ann, who occupied it after the death of his father James, around 1696. James, the first Dashiell, had purchased a 300-acre tract called Long Hill from Samuel Jackson in 1671. A son of James and Margaret Inglis Dashiell, James was born in 1634, in Edinburgh, Scotland, and emigrated from Yorkshire, England, to Northumberland County, Virginia, in 1635. Ann Cannon, who became his bride in the new land, was born in 1639 in Yorkshire, England, and had been transported to Virginia in 1646, by her father, Edward. In 1663, James and Ann emigrated to Somerset County with their son James, and their niece Elizabeth. A slave-owner and, one must assume, a gentleman farmer, James Dashiell, Sr, played several roles in the early Colonial government of Somerset County. He was a surveyor of highways, a justice for civil affairs and a member of the Lower House of Maryland Assembly. He also served as a customs officer and was the 12th signer of the "Lord Baltimore Declaration" of 1682, which was "signed by twenty-five of the leading members of the Church of England in the province of Maryland, in the testimony of his impartiality, in administering the government of the Province, to Protestants as well as Roman Catholics." The house in which he lived, possibly the same as the present-day structure, was built around 1973 by William Davis, a carpenter from England. Upon his death, James left Long Hill to his wife, Ann, for her use, and after her death, the property then fell to James Dashiell, Jr., as trustee. Robert Dashiell, James Jr.'s brother, was to have eventual possession, as in fact he did. James and Ann Dashiell are thought to be buried at Long Hill.

The original patentee of Long Hill, the aforesaid Samuel Jackson, had arrived in Somerset County from Virginia in 1661, along with Col. William Colebourne. On July 13, 1668, appeared the first record of land surveyed for Samuel Jackson, planter. Called "Long Hill," the properly was situate on the south side of the Nanticoke River and on the east side of "Wotapquen" Creek, beginning at a small creek called Jackson's Creek and containing 300 acres. It is on record that in 1669, Samuel Jackson quartered soldiers for which he was paid tobacco.

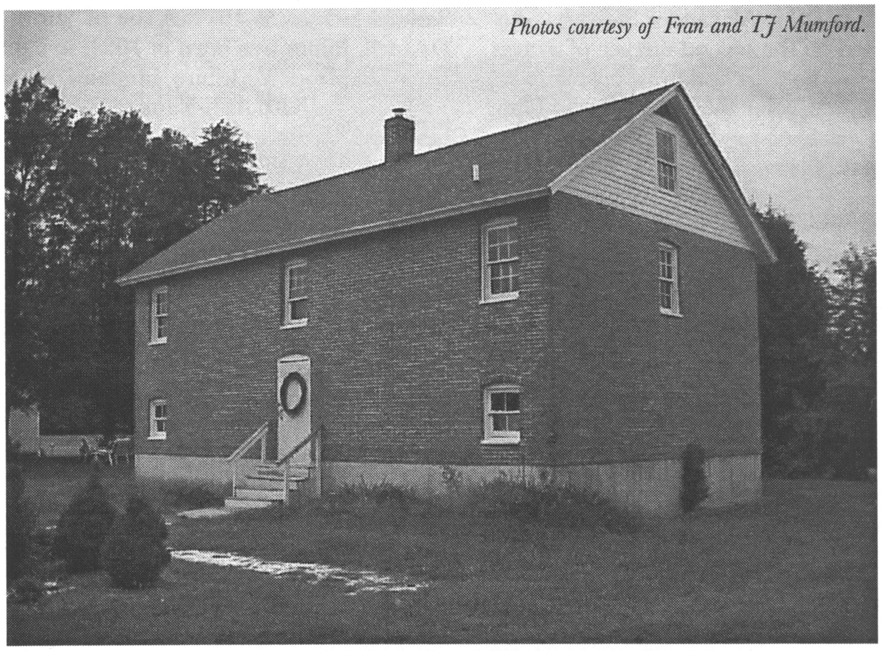
Thus may be seen the definitive importance which Long Hill holds for Wicomico County. In addition to the historical significance of the structure its architectural value, though at present the original portions of the house are in a deteriorating condition. The Wicomico Committee of the Maryland Historical Trust has been making necessary repairs to preserve the home as well as possible until such time as it might become available for restoration.

*** Rebecca Stewart, widow of Alexander Stewart, had married a certain James Dashiell by 1769.**

Note: This article was written by Anne Clay in 1974 and provides significant information on Long Hill to that time. The property was sold in the 1990s to the Graham family, who subsequently made many renovations to the historic structure [Ed.]. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Maple Leaf Potato House

By Fran Tracy-Mumford, Ph.D. and TJ Mumford, Ph.D.



Photos courtesy of Fran and TJ Mumford.

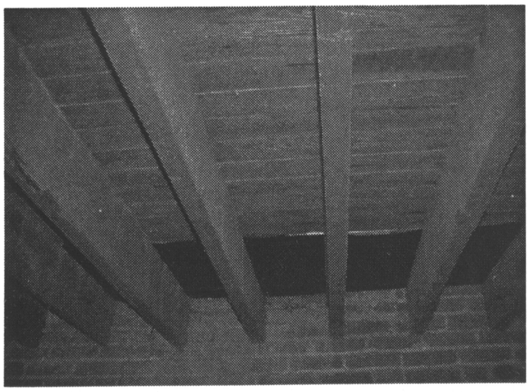
Sweet potato farming began on the Eastern Shore in the early 1800s as an American farming crop for families and the local market. Before the Civil War, sweet potatoes were not mass produced for the commercial market because the potato varieties did not store well and were difficult to ship. During the Civil War, a variety was found that was successful for commercial production for the Navy. The time gained by being able to store sweet potatoes before sending them to market allowed the farmer to produce a viable cash product.

The export of Wicomico County's sweet potato crop was accomplished by means of local transportation networks. Steamboats and trains provided reliable transportation to city markets. By the early 20th century, improvements in local roads and highway systems as well as the mass production and availability of trucks expedited the shipment of all sorts of farm products including the sweet potato.

By the 1890s, the potato house emerged as a means to store and cure sweet potatoes. Most potato drying houses in the Wicomico County area were built between 1890 and 1920. Almost all were modest buildings of 20 feet by 40 feet and three stories with the first story at least half below grade. A simple chimney in the center usually heated by coal kept the sweet potatoes from freezing.

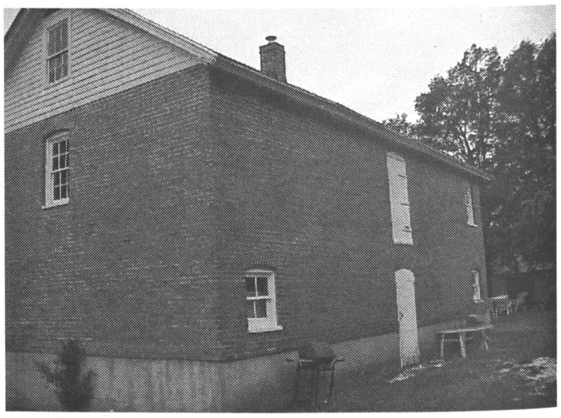
The Maple Leaf Potato House is one of the few surviving potato houses on the Delmarva Peninsula. It is different from many in that it is a brick structure instead of the typical timber building with clapboard sides. It is further unique in that its brick walls are 14 inches thick.

Maple Leaf Potato House currently sits on the property known as "Western Fields" just outside the town limits of Hebron in Wicomico County, Maryland. The brick potato house was moved to this location in July 1997 from its original site just east of the intersection of White Lowe Road and U.S. Route 50 on the westbound side of the road. It was moved weeks before it was slated for "demolition by the State of Maryland" to make way for the U.S. Route 50 bypass.



Maple Leaf Potato House measures 40 by 24 feet and is covered by a "medium pitched gable roof of asphalt shingles." It is a two-and-a-half-story, three-bay, common-bond, brick building that was built around 1920 on the Maple Leaf Farm to hold sweet potatoes grown for the Baltimore-Washington-Philadelphia marketplace.

The interior finish of the potato house has a concrete floor, exposed brick walls and a series of closely set floor joists. The joists are positioned on one-foot centers and supported by a summer beam. The second floor was accessed through a small opening in the floor directly above the front entrance and the third floor's opening was at the end of the building.



The property on which the potato house was built was known during the 20th century as the Maple Leaf Dairy Farm. The land, comprised of two tracts known as "White Fields" and "Maddux Chance," was purchased by Elisha Henry Rounds in 1908 for $4,150. The farm included 150 acres. According to Samuel Rounds, Henry Rounds' grandson, the potato house was erected around 1920. The growth of sweet potatoes on this farm took place over a 10 to 20 year period. The unusually thick walls were built to ensure the safe storage and curing of the crop. When the potato house was built, the interior was fitted with storage bins in the same tradition found in other regional potato houses. The bins were removed when Henry Rounds started using bushel tubs for storage. Rounds transported his potato crop by a two-horse wagon to Salisbury and sold them to local wholesale/retail buyer Patrick Doughty, whose market was located on Mill Street.

Around 1928, the family entered into the dairy business and assembled a Guernsey herd of 130-140 milk cows. In lieu of potatoes, the family grew corn and alfalfa hay. The potato house was then used as a storage building for milk cans and other farm equipment. In 1933, Henry Rounds' brother Robert was killed in an automobile accident. Since Robert was in charge of the cows, the daily operation was shut down following his death.

Henry Rounds died in 1953 and his farm was divided among his five children. The main house burned in the mid-1950s. In the 1960s, Maple Leaf Potato House once again was used to store potatoes by Jim Price.

Between 1970 and 1993 the potato house stood empty. In November 1993, the State Highway Administration purchased the land where the potato house stood to build the bypass for U.S. Route 50. The pending road construction in 1997 triggered the relocation of the potato house to the Porter Mill Road property of Fran and TJ Mumford where "Western Fields" (c. 1790) was located.

Jerry Matyiko received the grant from the State Highway Administration to dispose of the potato house and a couple of other small structures. Instead of demolishing the Potato House, Matyiko offered it to the Mumfords who arranged with Matyiko to move the building onto the Western Fields property. It was moved early one summer morning between the hours of midnight and 4:30 a.m.

Maple Leaf Potato House had captured the attention of the Mumfords before it was offered to them. One week before Matyiko inquired about the Mumfords being interested in the Potato House, Fran said to TJ, "If that potato house ever becomes available, I want it." Little did they know that in a few months it would be sitting on their property.

Maple Leaf Potato House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places soon after its relocation to the Western Fields property in 1998. Today, with a new roof and restored windows, it has been finished on the inside with recycled products from the Delaware Technical and Community College Jason Building, Trinity United Methodist Church's Jackson Memorial Building and the old Delmar Junior-Senior High School.

The Mumfords are avid preservationists and are the owners of the property known as Western Fields in Wicomico County.

Nabb Events

"Sources of Black Community: Faith and Family" Exhibit

January 16-February 28
1-4 p.m., MWF or contact the Nabb Research Center at 410-543-6312 for an appointment.
Nabb Research Center Gallery

This exhibit examines family connections and the role of religious institutions among Delmarva's African Americans. Co-curated by L. Paul Morris Jr., this exhibit is free and open to the public.

"African-American Family History" Workshop

Saturday, January 23, 10 a.m-1 p.m.
Nabb Research Center Reading Room

The unique challenges of researching African-American family histories will be discussed. Share your research interests! This event is free and open to the public. Contact the Nabb Center at 410-543-6312 for reservations; seating will be limited.

"Men of Color to Arms" Lecture

Saturday, February 6, 2-4 p.m.
Nabb Research Center Gallery

SU History Professor Clara Small and the Reverend David Briddell will comment on their newly published book, *Men of Color to Arms: Manumitted Slaves and Free Blacks from the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland Who Served in the Civil War.* The presentation will be followed by a book signing. This event is free and open to the public.

"African-American Education: Rosenwald Schools" Program

Wednesday, February 17, 7 p.m.
Nabb Research Center Gallery

This program will showcase the preservation efforts of three area Rosenwald schools—San Domingo, Wetipquin and Germantown—and discuss other early segregated schools of Delmarva. Moderated by author and local historian Linda Duyer, this event is free and open to the public.

"African-American Soldiers in WWI" A Presentation by SU Professor Stephen C. Gehnrich

Wednesday, March 10, 7 p.m.
Nabb Research Center Gallery

This presentation will describe how and why African Americans joined the U. S. Army during World War I, the roles they played in the ultimate victory, and how their service was viewed in post-war America. Particular mention will be made of Salisbury's Sgt. William A. Butler, "Maryland's Greatest Hero." This event is free and open to the public.

"A Portrait of an Eastern Shore Woman" Exhibit

March 22-May 18
1-4 p.m. MWF or contact the Nabb Research Center at 410-543-6312 for an appointment.
Nabb Research Center Gallery

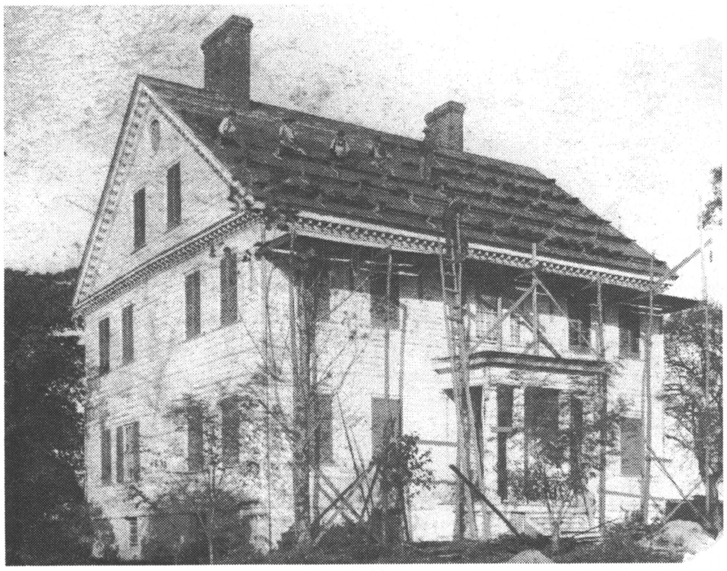
Clara Gunby, a feisty Eastern Shore woman, was accused of treason for spying for the Confederacy. When the war ended, she returned to the Salisbury area. The Nabb Center joins with Poplar Hill Mansion in displaying Gunby's diaries and a series of seldom-seen oil paintings, providing a window into mid-19th century education and culture. This exhibit is free and open to the public.

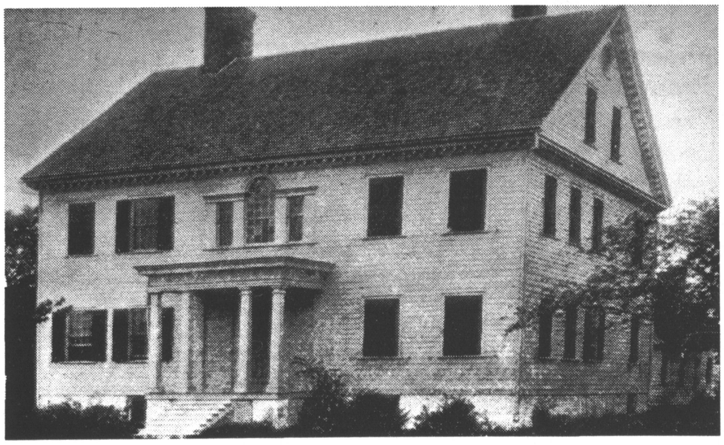
Nabb Research Center Annual Fundraising Event

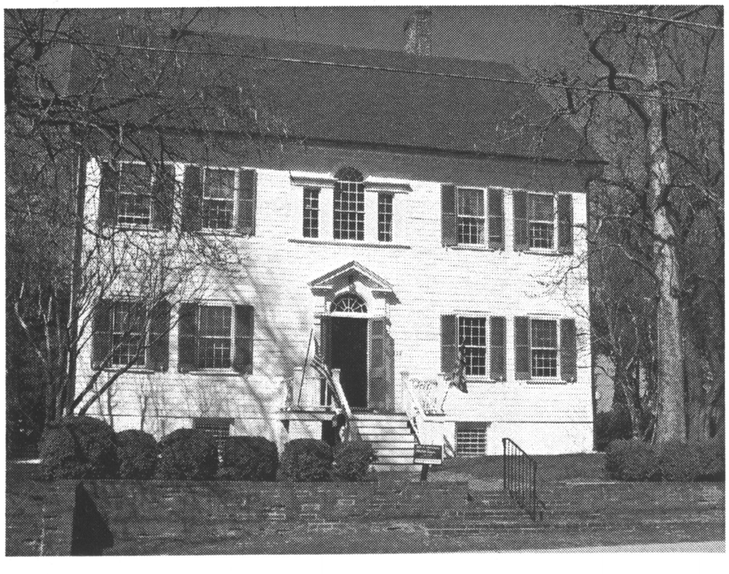
Saturday, May 1
Home of Tom Shelton, owner and vintner, at Bordeleau Vineyards and Winery

Poplar Hill Mansion

By Jason Ilari







Poplar Hill Mansion is the oldest surviving house in Salisbury, Maryland. Its foundation was laid around 1795 on a tract of land called "Pemberton's Good Will," located just northeast of the City of Salisbury. Pemberton's Good Will was originally patented in 1680 by John Winder and contained about 700 acres of land. Records indicate that a certain Levin Handy of Rhode Island acquired roughly 300 acres of the original patent in February and November 1795 and began construction of the house. The Vital Records of Rhode Island note Handy was baptized at Trinity (Anglican) Church in Newport in December 1764. In May 1797, Handy filed a petition to the Worcester County Court to ask if the road leading to "Mitchell's Bridge" and cutting through his property "not far from the town of Salisbury" could "be turned." The Annals and Memorials of the Handys and their Kindred, compiled by Isaac Handy in the mid-19th century, state that Handy "purchased a farm in the vicinity of Salisbury and erected thereupon a stately and commodious mansion, which for many years was one of the chief ornaments of the neighborhood." Another source notes, "Mrs. Humphries was a daughter of the late Dr. John Huston, who purchased in [1805], Poplar Hill, then incomplete. Dr. Huston completed the property and made it the family home for over 50 years." Interestingly, a Maryland Historical Trust buildings survey mentions architectural similarities between Poplar Hill and Chanceford Hall near Snow Hill. Levin Handy was definitely in contact with its builder James Rownd Morris on at least one occasion. Both of their names are listed on the February 1795 Pemberton's Good Will land transaction. Some of the similarities listed by the Trust include hierarchy of window placement, attic bull's eye windows and frontal five-bay symmetry.

Dr. John Huston and his wife Sarah raised four daughters at Poplar Hill and the name was probably coined by their family. A bill of sale dated December 1852 between Sarah and her daughter Sally states, "I have given, bargained & sold and by these presents, do give, bargain, & sell unto her the said Sally F. Huston her heirs and assigns forever all the grain which May be on the Poplar Hill farm either in the house or standing Or growing on the land at the time of my death." Recent research has uncovered Dr. Huston owned a bank on the southeast corner of Bridge Street and Bank Alley in Salisbury. The Hustons also played a substantial role in founding the Presbyterian Church in Salisbury. A deed issued by Sarah Huston dated February 1833 to "The Committee of the Presbyterian Church at Salisbury in Worcester County" entrusted a tract of land "to erect thereon one house adapted for the use of the Congregation of said Church made for the purpose of divine worship."

Poplar Hill was owned by the Waller family from approximately 1882 to 1945. George Waller, of Sussex County, Delaware, purchased the mansion from trustees of the Huston family in 1879. Julia (Waller) Graham, granddaughter of George Waller, wrote of the house in 1927:

> It is divided into four rooms 18 x 28 ft the same number as are on the first and second floors. The cellar hall also runs the same length as the hall above. Neither it nor the rooms have ever been plastered and the beams which support the ceiling have always been a source of great interest to people on account of their

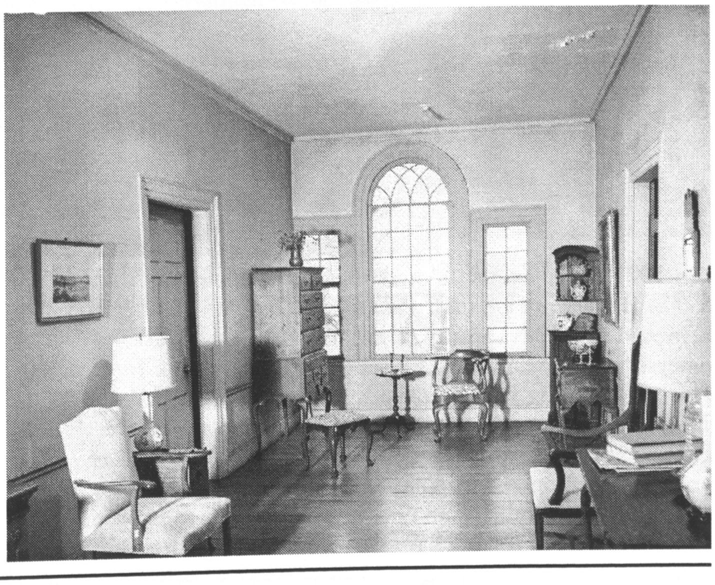
four inches of thickness and ten inches of width. The walls are of brick and where extra strong support is necessary and also economy the bricks are arched rather than filled in solidly. This is exactly the same principle used in building the Old Furnace near Snow Hill. Large thick old doors with either chains or heavy bars are the only means of locking the rooms or hall. Coming to the next floor one can see that beauty has entered as a factor to be dealt with. Upon entering the front door a wide hall is seen extending through the entire house from north to south in the middle of which is an enormous fluted and paneled archway just preceding the staircase. Major Handy engaged quite easily at that time a painter to give the wood an imitation marble finish. It is done quite cleverly the background being a dull grey and finishing off with splotches and streaks of blue paint.

After Waller, ownership the house was sold to Fred P. Adkins in July 1948. Adkins was a prominent businessman in Salisbury and at one time served as president of E.S. Adkins & Company, which specialized in manufacturing "everything needed for building lumber and box shooks." Several sources indicate that Adkins purchased the mansion with the hope of converting it into a Masonic Lodge. In a Sunday Times article dated May 1974, Salisbury realtor S. Denmead Kolb recalled that Adkins installed "central heating, bathrooms and good electrical service." The lodge plans never transpired, and in 1949, Adkins sold the mansion to Ward and Dorothy Garber of Harrisonburg, Virginia. The family set up an antique shop in the mansion and lived on the second floor of the house. By 1971, Dorothy Garber and other individuals interested in preserving the history of the mansion undertook steps to have Poplar Hill officially nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. In 1974, the City of Salisbury was gifted the mansion and it officially became owned in the public trust as a house museum.

Poplar Hill's history is closely intertwined with African-American heritage in Salisbury and its surrounding areas. Levin and Saul Huston, two individuals who secured manumission from Sarah Huston, became founding fathers of the John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church and the Huston (African-American) Cemetery in Salisbury. The John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church, now the Charles H. Chipman Cultural Center, is one of the earliest surviving African-American churches on Delmarva. Located near Salisbury's "Newtown," the church was originally known as "Church on the Hill" or "Hill Church" upon its completion around 1837. New information is coming to light about the freedman activities of Levin Huston who apparently had close ties with an African-American individual named James F. Brown of New York. Brown worked for the Verplanck family at their home Mount Gulian in Beacon, New York. Levin Huston is frequently mentioned in Brown's diary entries. Saul (Solomon) Huston lived until about 1916. Historian Richard W. Cooper once commented, "Solomon T. Huston is remembered as a highly respected citizen of Salisbury."

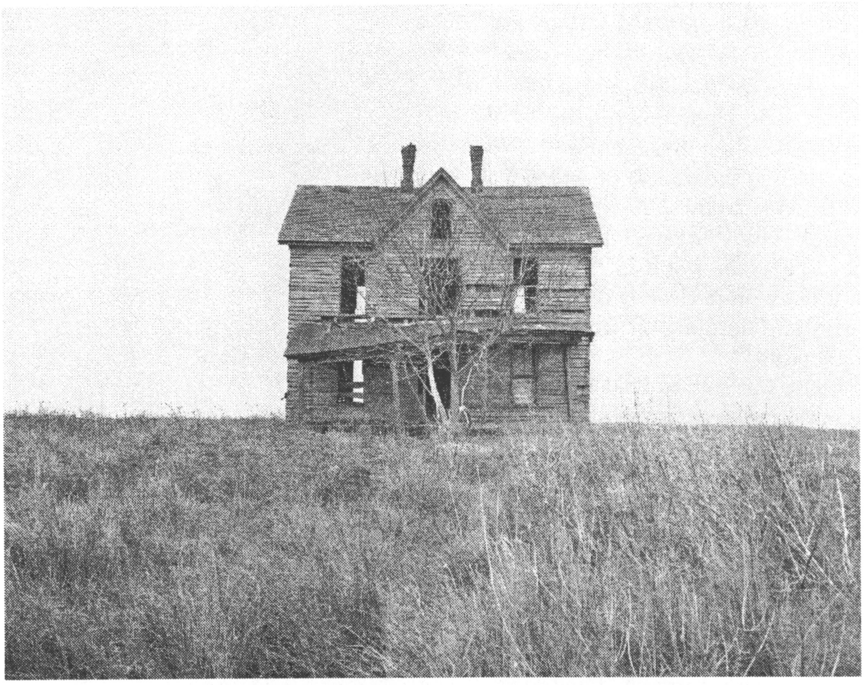
Today, visitors can tour the mansion for a nominal fee by calling Curator Nancy Marasco at 410-749-1776. Poplar Hill offers numerous educational and recreational activities year round. For more information visit www.poplarhillmansion.org

Jason Illari is curator of the City of Bowie Museums in Bowie, Maryland, and former curator of Poplar Hill Mansion.

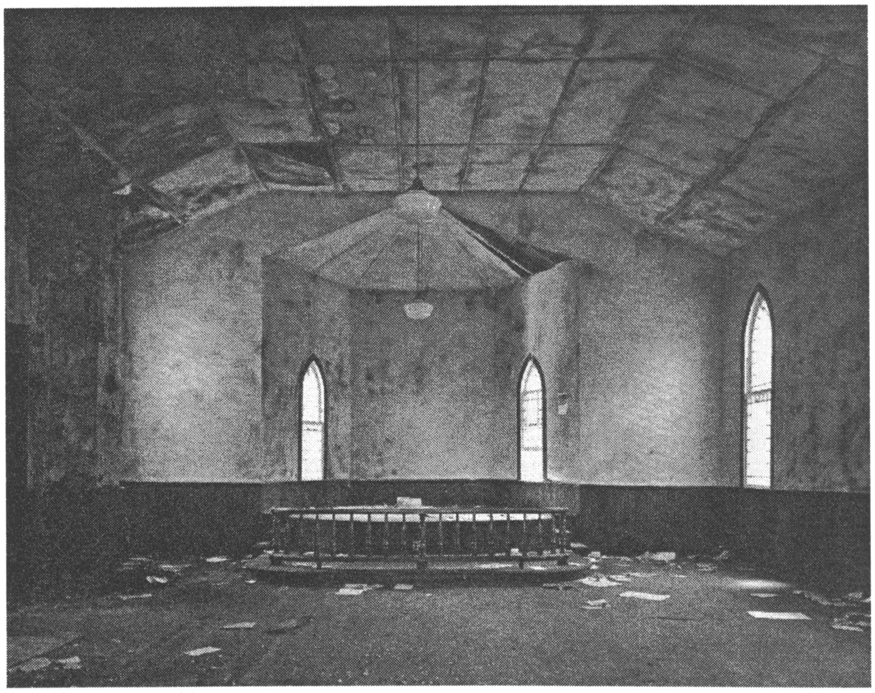


Steve Szabo, The Eastern Shore Series

By Kathleen Ewing



The Goat House on Wolftrap Creek, St. Pierre Marsh. A family of abandoned goats lives in this house. When I first approached the house the goats hid inside; as I got closer all I could see were goats running out the doors and jumping out the windows. This happened every time I visited the house.



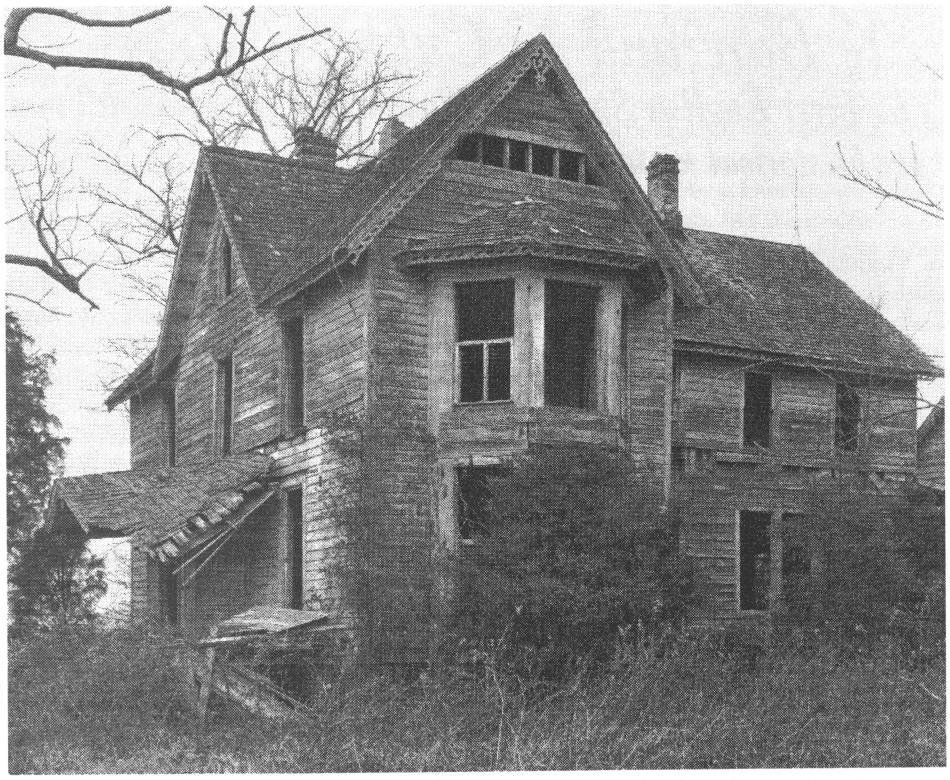
The Christ M.E. Church on the Overholt Road to Pocomoke City. The date on the corner stone is 1886. The calendar on the wall is dated 1957.

In 1971, Steve Szabo, an award-winning photographer for *The Washington Post*, took a six month leave of absence and moved to a 19th century farmhouse in a remote area of Somerset County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. In contrast to his fast-shooting photojournalistic style, Szabo began working with a large-format, 8 x 10 inch view camera to record the haunting scenes of Americana that he found on the Eastern Shore. He developed a fascination for the region and, when the leave of absence came to an end, he retired from the Post and continued to roam the back roads, woods and marshes of the isolated Somerset County.

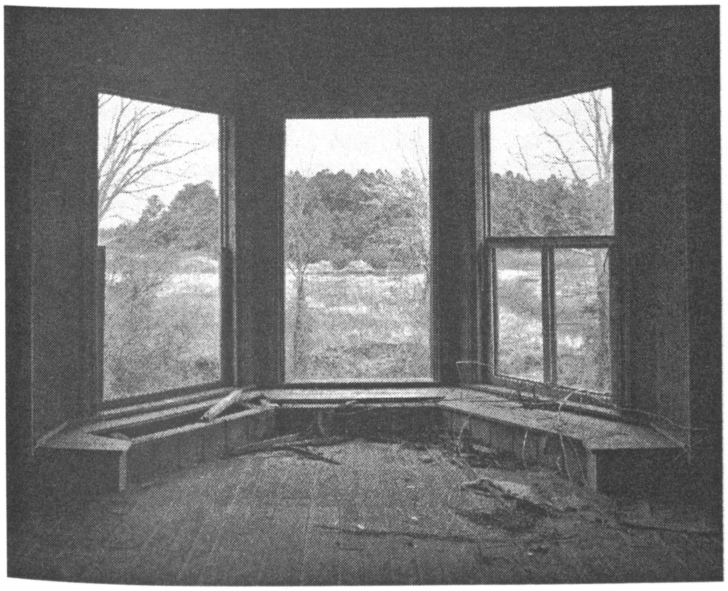
To reflect the atmosphere of the Eastern Shore region, Szabo chose to print his photographs in the platinum process, which requires hand-coating rag paper with platinum emulsions and contact printing the 8 x 10 inch negatives. The final photographic prints have much the quality of an etching, with an extraordinary tonal range.

Editing from hundreds of negatives, Szabo selected 28 images to illustrate his 1976 publication, *The Eastern Shore*, which included stories from the time Szabo spent in Somerset County.

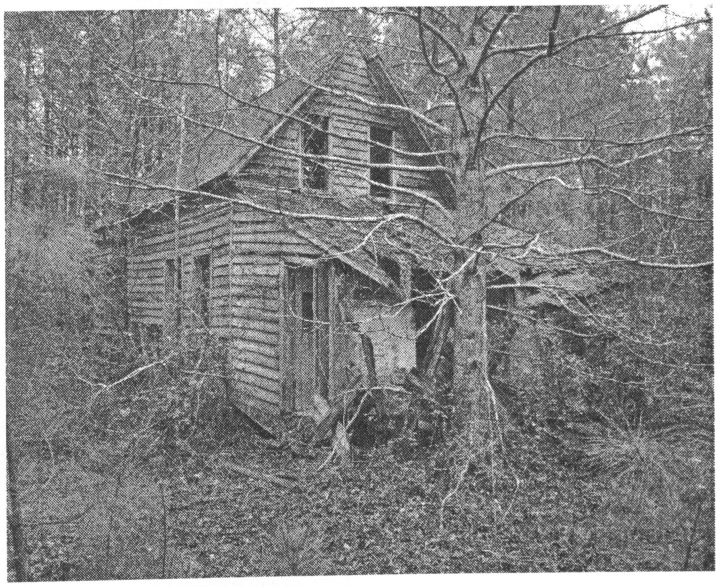
The Richardson House located on the road to Quindacqua Marsh. When I asked a long-time area resident about the house, the first thing he said was that it was haunted. I asked him how he knew that, and he chuckled and said that everyone knew that.



The south side of the Richardson House. I've always thought it would be a fine place for a bedroom, a place to wake up in and look out over the fields.



This house is one of three farm buildings still standing on this property in what is now the Pocomoke National Forest. I have no idea when the house was built, who lived there or when it was abandoned. It has stone fireplaces and this tree growing into what was the front porch.



An exhibition of 40 photographs from the Eastern Shore series traveled to over 15 museums across the United States between 1976 and 1978.

Of *The Eastern Shore* series, one critic wrote, "One wonders at the lives enacted in these abandoned houses, the drama of the abandoned cars. Economics rendered these scenes empty of humanity—the waterman's world has collapsed, farming has dwindled for various reasons, young people do not stay."

Szabo eventually returned to Washington, D.C., where he enjoyed a long and successful career teaching photography at the Corcoran School of Art. He continued to produce various photographic series until he was stricken with multiple sclerosis. He died peacefully in May 2000.

Szabo's photographs continue to be represented by the Kathleen Ewing Gallery in Washington, D.C.

Ye Bare and Ye Cubbe, 1665:

The First English Speaking Play in the New World, Its Historical Context and Seeds for U.S. Attitudes

By Bonnie B. Barnidge

Our Eastern Shore of Virginia can be proud of being the site of the first English-speaking play performed in this new world. Specifically, the location for this unique event was Pungoteague, Virginia, in Accomack County in 1665. The play, placed in its historical context, highlights interesting beginnings in the development of our country. The original script is lost, but Joel D. Eis, theater arts professor at the University of North Dakota has written a well-researched, informative book *A Full Investigation of the Historic Performance of the First Play in English in the New World: The Case of Ye Bare and Ye Cubbe, 1665* on the subject of the play. Eis was able to piece together historic information and to make conjectures that lead to a vivid understanding of the play and the era. Highlights of this venture include the fact that the play was an early focus on the theme that became increasingly prominent over the following century as "taxation without representation!"

By 1665, the original 1632 Accawmacke County on the Eastern Shore of Virginia had become two counties, Northampton and Accomack. An "Ordinary," or tavern, had been opened in Accomack County. It accommodated travelers with meals and lodging; it also served as a community center, including being the site of the county court when it was in session. By this time in the 17th century, Court Day was becoming a day, or part of a few days, to do business. Land titles were transferred, horses traded, races were held on the shell roads and regattas in the rivers. This community center/ordinary/court house fostered development of community attitudes shaped by common English worldviews and unique Eastern Shore situations. These spawned the presentation of this historic play on Sunday, August 27, 1665.

The playwright, William Darby, probably had some familiarity with theater in England. Performances were illegal during the time of Cromwell's reign, although there were underground antiestablishment performances. In 1660, Charles II was restored to the throne. He loved the theater and licensed various groups to perform legally. Plays could range from slapstick comedy to drama, but there were certain rules, including the prohibition of seditious materials. Our first play, *Ye Bare and Ye Cubbe*, in Pungoteague, the probable site of Fowkes' Tavern, was likely full of slapstick comedy with a deeper level of meaning for those experiencing life at that time on the Eastern Shore in the English Colony of Virginia. The Bare (bear) was an allegory for the King or English power while the Cubbe (cub) represented the Colony of Virginia. The cub would have been mischievous and devious. This would have been comic relief for the colonists who were experiencing grief over the effects of the Navigation Acts on their cash crops, especially tobacco. Many colonists, including many prestigious ones, were in serious debt.

WY 18
"THE BEAR AND THE CUB"
PROBABLE SITE OF FOWKES' TAVERN WHERE THIS FIRST RECORDED PLAY IN ENGLISH AMERICA WAS PERFORMED AUGUST 27, 1665.
VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION 1968

Initially, there seemed no negative consequences coming from the performance. But after more than two months, according to court records of the times, charges were brought by a Quaker man named Edward Martin. Although his specific grounds are not known, he could have charged that the play was performed illegally on a Sunday. He could have charged that alcoholic beverages were served and/or that an indentured servant, who had played the cub, had been in an alehouse. Each was illegal, the former on Sundays, the latter at any time. Finally and most seriously for the community, Martin could have charged that seditious material was communicated. The community leaders and officials were caught in conflicts of interests. On the one hand, they were responsible for upholding their English law. On the other hand, these responsible citizens or their friends had likely attended the play and had been supportive of the dramatic presentation. The hearing was scheduled and held about a month after the charges were placed.

At the hearing on a weekday and presumably without alcoholic beverages, the judge requested the play be presented once more for himself and the jury. It can be imagined that a serious version of the play would have been presented, one that would not have implied the seditious theme, maybe only a story about two animals, not an allegory. The defendants, actors and playwright were acquitted. The plaintiff, who had not appeared, was fined court costs. It seems probable that since Accomack County was remote from Jamestown as well as far removed from England, these colonists had dared to express, in the initial presentation, some of the disloyal attitudes that were bubbling up during this difficult period. Yet, without the plaintiff present, they were shrewd enough to devise a way to exonerate themselves. We can wonder what detained the Quaker Edward Martin!

My ancestor, Amy Anderson, and her husband, Thomas Fowkes, were the tavern keepers where the play was performed. This genealogical discovery led to my initial interest in the play and its historical context of the

Eastern Shore of Virginia in the 17th century. I wanted to better imagine what life was like for my ancestor and her contemporaries. I was awed by many differences in the world of the 1600s as compared to my own. I was intrigued in finding many seeds of our contemporary culture and worldview, including our independent spirit, some growth toward tolerance of diversity, our developing leadership from a community rather than a structured class society, and finally a trusted responsible role for women.

Before European settlers, the population was Indian and the forests were dense. Where it was possible to see the sky, it could be blackened with geese. The waterways were deeper and wider, teeming with fish, crabs and oysters. In addition to being the owner of the ordinary, another function of our Pungoteague tavern keeper could have been that of ferryman for crossing the nearby stream. While it is hard to imagine the small creek nearby today as a vehicle for boats or deep enough to need a ferryman, this reminds us that creeks and streams of today are filled in remnants of the bygone rivers and streams of the 1600s.

As settlers began to come to Virginia's Eastern Shore, the Indians were generally friendly, but considered the newcomers strange and smelly. Indeed, since the 14th century Black Death plague in Europe, medieval folks rarely bathed. Water had been blamed for the spread of disease. Few had clothing changes; daytime underwear was the usual bedtime attire. Many settlers were malnourished, even after learning subsistence farming. Germs spread due to eating from common utensils as well as a lack of sanitary means of disposing of garbage and sewage. Jamestown, founded in 1607, nearly failed, but for occasional Indian hospitality and the early assumption of leadership by John Smith for a brief time. Smith brought early fairness and order. He importantly insisted that each man do his fair share of the manual work needed for survival, despite the English notion held by most of these gentlemanly first settlers, that working with one's hands was beneath their dignity. Early settlers were not initially hunters, fishermen or farmers, but they learned that these skills were needed to survive. Initial settlers stayed close to the rivers as a food source and as major transportation routes. The plentiful trees made fuel for warmth and cooking, materials for building houses and ships, as well as a commodity for import to England, whose forests had been decimated a few centuries before. In 1612, John Rolfe brought tobacco to Virginia from the West Indies. (The native Indians already had tobacco, but their variety was not commercially preferred.)

As more settlers arrived, the thrust was to clear the land and plant tobacco as the cash crop. According to James Perry's *The Formation of a Society on Virginia's Eastern Shore: 1615-1655*, in 1634 there were merely 396 settlers on the Eastern Shore. But the headright system helped the population grow as it encouraged younger sons of the privileged, as well as lower class persons, to come to Virginia, lured by the promise of 50 acres of land per person. Many who could not afford the price of passage came as indentured servants. They would serve a term of servitude, usually five to seven years, for their sponsor, who had paid their passage and give up the 50 acres of headright land to their sponsor/master. Women came initially in 1621 (the 1624 census of 51 people included six women and two children). Most women came as indentured servants, forbidden to marry until their term of servitude had expired. After their servitude years, they often stayed and married. These, along with a few who came as wives, began families. Early houses had dirt floors and were small, maybe limited to one room of 16 feet by 16 or 20 feet for the entire family and some of their animals. Manners were crude; the culture and worldview of our Eastern Shore in the early 17th century was medieval. Initially, servants also lived with the family. Negroes were first brought to Virginia in 1619, unexpectedly left by a Dutch ship. These were treated as indentured servants, but the institution of slavery for persons of color developed in Virginia and the other colonies during this century. The first recorded Negro sale on the Eastern Shore was before 1640. Eventually some Africans became free, but most became slaves.

By the 1650s, the population was adapting to the reality and possibilities of their Chesapeake region. The headright system and the profit possibilities of the Virginia Colony, especially based on the profits from tobacco, had caused some growth in population. Land was plentiful. Tobacco depleted the land in a few years, but early farmers would simply clear more land. The plantation system was the basic structure for the farming family. A few were becoming large establishments. Median acreage from 1626 to 1630 had been 75 acres. Between 1651 and 1655, that median had grown to 500 acres. Slavery, minimal at the beginning, was becoming the answer to the labor-intensive needs of the tobacco crop. Towns were few on the peninsula but were being established at trading crossroads where rivers met, and later at places that became seats of government. (Towns as ports for commerce began late in the century; initially planters had preferred their own wharfs). Education was only in the home; reading scripture and doing figures were considered important. A return to England for schooling or to serve an apprenticeship was possible for only a few. Most settlers were illiterate. For those who could write, spelling was not standardized. There were variations, usually according to sound.

By 1665, the year of the play, there were not many comforts, yet settlers could be satisfied that things were improving. Ordinaries may have been able to offer a private room for overnight, but most slept in a bed with two or six lodgers and shared common food and drinking utensils. There was little printed money or currency, but barter, credit and tobacco were usually used to settle debts. Representative government had taken hold. Fowkes' Ordinary also functioned as a community center and was probably the county voting location. The franchise in the 17th century was given to white males at least 21 years old. They were required to be Anglicans and property owners of at least 150 acres or of comparable means for those few men whose wealth was from a business or profession. Each county elected burgesses to the Assembly in Jamestown as well as local officials for their county. As the still sparse population grew (maybe 1,000 in 1665) and became organized, there were opportunities for men of humble beginnings to achieve prosperity, to rise in class status, and to take on more community responsibility and leadership.

The Anglican English, who now controlled the Crown and Parliament, were not well disposed toward Quakers or those of other religious affiliations such as Catholics or Puritans. Indeed, there was an English law that demanded Sunday attendance at Anglican services for all inhabitants of the colony. In light of such a law, could resentment be the motivation for placing charges against the playwright and the two performers by a Quaker? Maybe he had suffered some intolerance expressed verbally or in action taken toward him or other Quakers? Yet, it should be noted that on the Eastern Shore there was some acceptance of Quakers, and some rose in status and wealth.

In 17th century England, Ecclesiastical Courts made laws based on the Church's understanding of morality. These laws carried penalties of public confessions, which included shaming, the stocks, whipping or fines. Since there was no ecclesiastical court in this new country, the Jamestown Assembly and later the county governments performed this function. Besides the illegal acts mentioned previously, abusive and blasphemous speaking, drunkenness, absence from Church on Sunday, adultery and fornication, as well as having bastard children were among the offenses to be punished. Yet, on the Eastern Shore, we can see some laxness in enforcement. Perhaps an "Ecclesiastical Court" of laymen in a remote, still sparsely populated area, ignored some infringements as they experienced that networking around other commonly perceived issues and needs could be the priority. Perhaps there was also more privacy, confidentiality, forbearance and independence among individuals and small groups than in England.

Another difference from English custom was the fluidity of the class system. Here was a community which presented an opportunity to enhance one's wealth and status. Indeed pursuing this dream was a reason for many settlers to brave the voyage to, and the hardships of, this new world. Here was a community where those of different classes might intermingle and learn form each other while working together. For example, the actor playing the cub was Phillip Howard, a young indentured servant. Cornelius Watkinson, who had recently increased his landholdings, played the bear. It can be noted that the playwright, probably poor and newly arrived, and the two actors were each from a different social class yet were able to work toward the common goal of presenting the play. Additionally, our first English-speaking play in this country, performed in this tavern/community center/courthouse, would have drawn an audience from all classes.

The Anglican people of the Eastern Shore peninsula had rejoiced at the restoration of King Charles in 1660. They felt that this would bring stability and hoped for fairer treatment. By 1665, the joy was turning to bitterness as Charles II broadened the difficult trade policies that had begun during the interregnum reign of Cromwell. These increasingly put much economic pressure on the colonists to the economic advantage of the home country. Tariffs and transportation costs were high. These costs and limitations depleted tobacco profits.

These social and economic pressures triggered the comic relief elicited by our first play, which conveys an early attitude of resentment toward English power. An independent spirit and developing maturity in political systems along with perceptions of unfair laws eventually unified much of the population on the East Coast and led to the independent United States experiment of 1776.

Some Genealogy Notes

The ancestor who inspired me to write this essay was Amy Anderson Fowkes of Fowkes' Tavern, where the play was performed. Reflecting on her life and environment has enhanced my understanding of her life and of those with whom she mingled, socialized and networked. She had married Thomas Fowkes (also ffowkes, Fooks, or Foulke) by 1662. I was not able to find Amy's maiden name. By researching the probable birth dates of her known children, I have speculated that she was born around 1623 in Virginia or England. Her oldest child, Richard Pritchett, may have been about 11 years old when his stepfather, my ancestor, Garrett Anderson, died in 1648. Richard could have been born about 1637 as women often bore their first child at 14 or 15 years. Thus, Amy's birth year is speculated as being about 1623. Amy seems to have been stepmother to Garrett's oldest son, Peter, and mother to their four children, Garrett, Amy, William and Elizabeth Anderson. Garrett Andrewes, who bought the Negro John from Mrs. Charles Harmer for 1,200 pounds of tobacco, was probably my ancestor. This purchase indicates he was a man of some substance. Slavery was becoming an acceptable assistance toward prosperity; records indicate that Garrett was a respected member of the community. After Garrett died, Amy married Nicholas Waddelow (also spelled Waddelowe, Waddeloe, or Wadloe), a Quaker. They had three daughters, Temperance, Patience and Comfort Waddelow. While some Quakers fled Virginia due to intolerance laws, Nicholas had become a respected citizen, evidencing a pocket of tolerance. Nicholas died in 1660. The property he had acquired earlier that year was brought by his widow, Amy, to her next husband, Thomas Fowkes. On that property, they built and operated Fowkes' Ordinary.

Amy is known to have married four times, first to a Pritchett, then to Garrett Anderson, then Nicholas Waddelow and finally to Thomas Fowkes. Women were not allowed to own property by English law. Yet, their responsible partnerships with their spouses brought many respect and opportunities to lead competently. The Virginia men began a custom of often willing their property to their trusted wives, rather than their oldest son. Thus, these widows could bring the property along with their children and stepchildren to their next marriage. Death often came early; life was usually short. Given Amy's longevity, it would not be unusual for her to have married four times and to have acquired wealth, status and property, as well as children, along the way. Marriage in her century was not usually for love, but rather a business arrangement needed for survival as well as having and caring for children. In their turn, children usually cared for their parents and step-parents as they aged. Forty or 50 years was considered ancient. Amy Pritchett Anderson Waddelow Fowkes died in 1678. If born c. 1623, then Amy lived to approximately 55 years; this was indeed a long life.

Thomas Fowkes died in 1674, four years before Amy. In his will, he leaves Fowkes' Ordinary to his Quaker step-daughter, Comfort Waddelow and her husband, Ambrose White. This act seems another example of tolerance for Quakers and of caring about stepchildren.

People in this time and place of new and different circumstances seemed to be re-evaluating their values and priorities as evidenced by their ability to promote a fluid class structure based on ability and achievement rather than birth. There were pockets of tolerance for those of differing religious persuasions, such as Quakers. As to the relationships with the native Indians, there was usually peace on this peninsula. Indians taught settlers many skills applicable to their new environment. Indians were often treated fairly. They could take grievances against settlers to Court and might win. Yet, as the century progressed and the colonists needed more land, Indians faced some hostility, with lethal aggression from some, especially the powerful Edmund Scarborough. He was sometimes found guilty in the courts, yet he was not tried for some of his murderous deeds and leadership. Did Indians become afraid to bring charges? Were community leaders supporting Scarborough by their negligence or even by their own violent tendencies? As to Africans, their human tragedy in this country began in Virginia. Slavery became legal and became lifelong within this century. It became the inheritance of children of slaves. It seems the economic need for labor, especially for the tobacco crop, outweighed some initial ideas of tolerance that led to freedom. The slaves became a major support for economic success in Virginia. Because the number of English recruits for the indentured servant system decreased during this century and because these became free after a few years, that system could not supply all the needed labor. An economic need had subsumed an initial viewpoint that had treated the blacks as indentured servants, entitled to eventual freedom. Economics also seemed to bring unfair treatment to the friendly and helpful Indians. As the colonists needed land, their fairness to the native population began to evaporate. Many Indians died with European diseases or fled north to friendlier territory.

We are an experiment in democracy and tolerance. In looking at my ancestors, their contemporaries and their 17th century era, including a 1665 play, we can see the early thrust toward an independent spirit. Although the Crown and Parliament appointed some top government officials, there was representational, elected leadership. The community favored the decisions of these elected leaders. It encouraged upward movement in class status and prosperity with some elements of greater tolerance for diversity than practiced in the Mother Country. Yet, it seems clear that as the 17th century progressed, the desire for power and prosperity eventually led these ancestors and their contemporaries to some intolerance and even violence.

My ancestor, Amy Anderson, died as the widow of Thomas Fowkes. According to early records, she had cared for eight children and a stepchild. She had achieved prosperity, community status and respect. At her death, her will indicates property that would allow a lifestyle considered fortunate for the 17th century. Her children and grandchildren were doing well. She seems to have been a trusted wife and partner for her husbands, a good provider for her children and stepchild. I continue to wonder what her role would have been in regard to the play. Certainly her husband, Thomas Fowkes, was there, but would she have been? Often women stayed away from the gatherings of men when they were drinking and carousing. On the other hand, her help at the performance may have been needed, unless servants could provide enough.

I have come to believe, as discovered in my history studies at Salisbury University and the Nabb Center, that our national history texts have tended to downplay the importance of 17th century Virginia in the development of this nation. The Virginia settlement predates the Puritan arrival and reveals settlers with an early and distinct influence on our worldview, customs, government, and laws.

Bonnie Barnidge, a Nabb Research Center member, is a descendant of Amy Anderson Fowkes of Fowkes' Tavern, where the play was performed.

In a Word

Continued from page 2

"cut-off" area must be examined as well. Original identifiers, such as oak trees, mulberry bushes, stones or even streams, may no longer be in the same location as they are suggested in the original records.

Property maps may provide additional information about a house. Fire-insurance maps and antique maps of the local area may provide unknown names of owners and of the positioning of a house on the larger property as well as any outbuildings that may have originally existed.

Finally, old photographs may provide invaluable information about the original appearance of a structure. An old house is more than just bricks and mortar or beams and shingles. Each house has a history and our authors have each, in their own way, provided insight into a house or houses that they have studied. Writing a history of a house is a multi-faceted undertaking. It involves a chain of title (ownership) to the property, identifying and describing the physical structure is quite another undertaking, and finally, coming to terms with generations of occupants provides an additional challenge to understanding an historic house.

Even the terms in legal documents themselves can offer a challenge to a researcher. One has to know that "Consideration" means the sale price; that "Messuage" refers to a dwelling with its outbuildings and surrounding lands; and the "Grantee" is the purchaser and the "Grantor" is the seller. An "Indenture" is a legal document or written contract while "Other Good and Valuable Considerations" may be an indication that the property is mortgaged.

Interior and exterior features of a structure may have been altered over the years. Partitions may have been added to interior rooms; windows added, modified or removed. Detective work is necessary and can be considerably fun or frustrating. Clues are in the records; it remains to the researcher to discover those clues to bring a vintage structure to life.

Old houses are fascinating. If you allow yourself to step back in time, whole generations of occupants who once dwelt in a structure might come to life as you research. Be aware also that there are potentially many "myths" to a house. Nevertheless, coming to know more about your house can be very rewarding. Enjoy the search as the authors of the articles in this Shoreline did.

Note: So many of our contributors came forward with wonderful articles on architecture that some will be included in a future issue of the *Shoreline*.

Volunteers

Without the thousands of volunteer hours donated by the people pictured here on these pages, we would not be able to do all that we do. Every week volunteers dedicate their time to historical research, preservation and conservation, creating records and cataloging, and ensuring that our doors are open to students and the public. To them we extend our deepest gratitude.

Carolyn Adkins

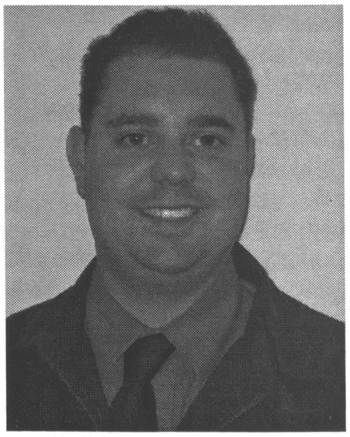
Page Austin

Polly Batchelder

Jefferson Boyer

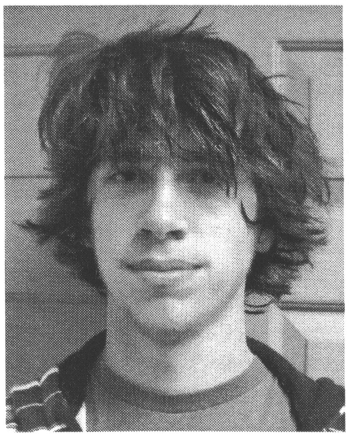
Bill Collison

Chris DiGiulian

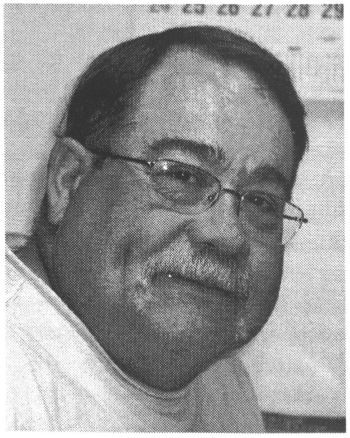


Linda Duyer

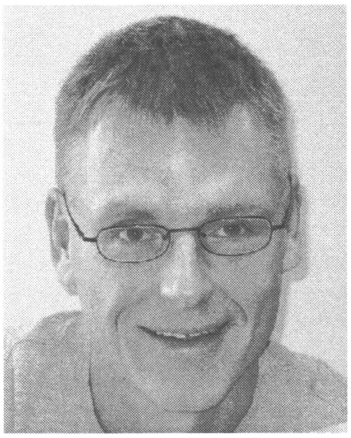
Colin Emberland



Roy Foreman

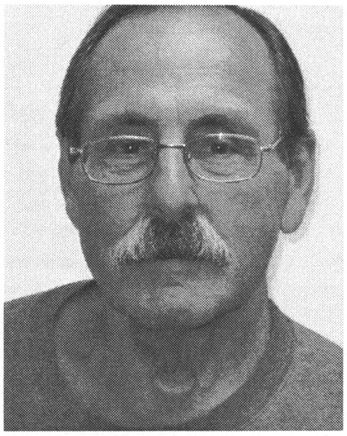


Mike Hitch

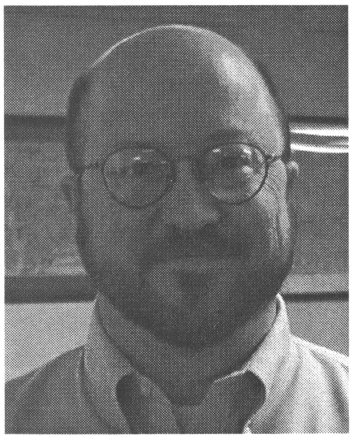


Lenore Huffer

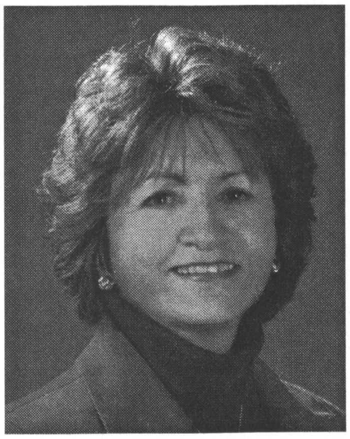
Walter Matern



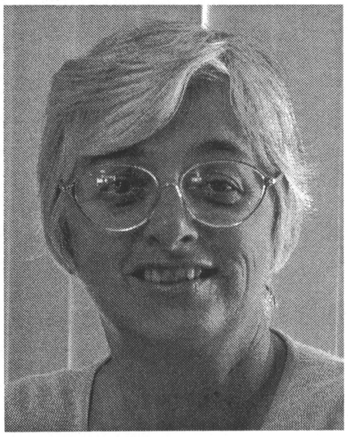
L. Paul Morris Jr.



Connie Strott

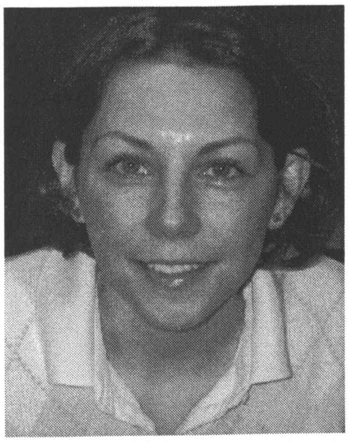


Pat Taylor



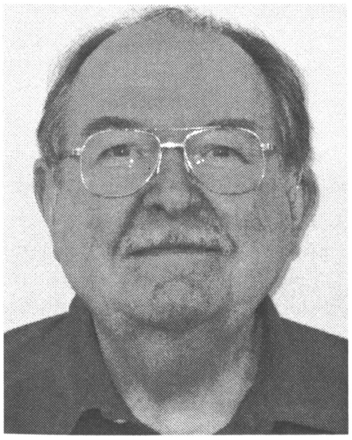
Lindsay Travis

Andreea Vlaicu



Jane West

Lloyd Whitehead



Shoreline